WILSON'S TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND. HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE.

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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A VILLAGE PATRIARCH.

THERE is no feeling more strongly or more generally implanted in the human breast, than man's love for the place of his nativity. The shivering Icelander sees a beauty, that renders them pleasant, in his mountains of perpetual snow; and the sunburned Moor discovers a loveliness in his sultry and sandy desert. The scenes of our nativity become implanted on our hearts like the memory of undying dreams; and with them the word *home* is for ever associated, and

> "Through pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
> Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

We cannot forget the place where our eyes first looked upon the glorious sun; where the moon was a thing of wonder, the evening companion of our childish gambols, joining with us in the race, and flying through the heavens as we ran! where we first listened to the song of the lark, received the outpourings of a mother's love upon our neck, or saw a father's eyes sparkle with joy as he beheld his happy children around him; where we first breathed affection's tale or heard its vows, and perchance were happy, wretched, blessed, or distracted, within a short hour. There is a magic influence about nativity that the soul loves to cherish. Its woods, its rivers, its hills, its old memories, fling their sha-

dows and associations after us, and over us, even to the ends of the earth; and while these whisper of our early joys, or of what we fancied to be care ere we knew what care was—its churchyard tells us we have a portion there—that there our brethren and our kindred sleep. We may be absent from it until our very name is forgotten; yet we love it not the less. The man who loves it not hath his affections "dark as Erebus." It is a common wish, and it hath patriotism in it, too, that where we drew our first breath, there also we should breathe our last. Yet, in this world of changes and vicissitudes, such is not the lot of many. While I thus moralise, however, I detain the reader from the Recollections of the Village Patriarch; and as some of the individuals mentioned in his reminiscences may be yet living, I shall speak of the place in which he dwelt as the village of A——.

The name of the patriarch was Roger Rutherford. He was in many respects a singular old man. He was the proprietor of three or four cottages, and of some thirty acres of arable land adjoining to them. He was a man of considerable reading, of some education, and much shrewdness. His years, at the period we speak of, were fourscore and four. By general consent, he was a sort of home-made magistrate in the village, and the umpire in all the disputes which arose amongst his neighbours. It was common with them to say, instead of going to law, "We will leave the matter to old Roger;" and the patriarch so managed or balanced his opinions, that he generally succeeded in pleasing both parties. He was also the living or walking history or chronicle of the village. He could record all the changes that had taken place in it for more than seventy years; and he could speak of all the ups and downs of its inhabitants. What Byron beautifully says of the ocean—

"Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow"—

might have been said of the memory and intellect of the

patriarch. He had also a happy art in telling his village tales, which rendered it pleasant to listen to the old man.

It was in the month of August, 1830, and just before the crops were ready for the sickle, old Roger was sitting, as his custom was (when the weather permitted), enjoying his afternoon pipe on a stone seat at the door, when a genteel-looking stranger, who might be about fifty years of age, approached him, and entered into conversation with him. The stranger asked many questions concerning the village and its old inhabitants, and Roger, eyeing him attentively for the space of a minute, said, "Weel, ye seem to ken something about the town, but I cannot charge my memory with having the smallest recollection o' ye; however, sit down, and I shall inform ye concerning whatever ye wish to hear."

So the stranger sat down beside the patriarch on the stone seat by the door, and he mentioned to him the circumstances respecting which he wished to be informed, and the individuals concerning whom he wished to learn tidings. And thus did the old man narrate his recollections, and the tales of

THE VILLAGE.

I have often thought, sir (he began), that A—— is one of the bonniest towns on all the Borders—indeed I may say in all broad Scotland. I dinna suppose ye will find its marrow in England; and I dinna say this through any prejudice in its favour, or partiality towards it, because I was born in it, and have lived in it now for the better part o' fourscore and four years; but I will leave your own eyes to be the judge. It is as clean as the hearth-stane of a tidy wife—and there certainly is a great improvement in it, in this respect, since I first knew it. There is the bit garden before almost every door, wi' vegetables in the middle, flowers alang the edges, a pear or cherry tree running up the side o' the house, and the sweet, bonny brier mixing wi' the

hedges round about. It lies just in the bosom of woods, too, in the centre of a lovely haugh, where the river soughs along, like the echo of the cooing of the cushats in the plantations. The population is four times what it was when I remember it first, and there are but few of the old original residenters left. There have been a great many alterations, changes, and improvements in it, since I first kenned it; but young folk will have young fashions, and it is of no use talking to them. The first inroad upon our ancient and primitive habits was made by one Lucky Riddle taking out a license to sell whisky, and tippenny, and other liquors. She hadna carried on the trade for six mouths, until a great alteration was observable in the morals c' several in the parish. It was a sad heart-sore to our worthy minister. He once spoke to me o' having Lucky Riddle summoned before the session. But says I to him—"Sir, I am afraid it is a case in which the session canna interfere. Ye see she has out a king's license, and she is contributing to what they call the revenue o' the country; therefore, if she be only acting up to her regulations, I doubt we canna interfere, and that we would only bring ourselves into trouble if we did."

"But, Roger," quoth he, "her strong drink is making weak vessels of some of my parishioners. There is Thomas Elliot, and William Archbold, or Blithe Willie, as some call him for a by-word; those lads, and a dozen o' others, I am creditably informed, are there, drinking, singing, swearing, fighting, or dancing, night after night; and even Johnny Grippy, the miser, that I would have made an elder last year, but on account o' his penuriousness, is said to slip in on the edge o' his foot every morning, to swallow his dram before breakfast! I tell ye, Roger, she is bringing them to ruin faster than I can bring them to a sense o' sin—or whatever impression I may make, her liquor is washing away. She has brought a plague amongst us, and it is entering our habitations—it is thinning the sanctuary, striking down our

strong men, and making mothers miserable. Therefore, unless Lucky Riddle will, in the meantime, relinquish her traffic, I think we ought, in duty, to prohibit her from coming forward on the next half-yearly occasion."

I was perfectly aware that there was a vast deal o' truth in what the minister said, but I thought he was carrying the case to a length that couldna be justified; and I advised him to remember that he was a minister o' the gospel, but not o' the law. So all proceedings against Mrs Riddle were stopped, and her business went on, doing much injury to the minds, bodies, purses, and families, of many in the village.

It was nae great secret that there were folk, both in and about the town, that had small stills concealed and working about their premises, and that there wasna a night but they sent gallons o' spirits owre the hills into England; but, by some means or other, government got wit of these clandestine transactions, and the consequence was, that a gauger was sent to live in the village, and three armed soldiers were billeted on the inhabitants, who had to provide beds for them week about. Nacbody cared for having men wi' swords and firearms in their house, and they preferred paying for their bed at Lucky Riddle's. They were regarded as spies, and their appearance caused a great commotion amongst young and old. I often feared that the spirit of murmuring would break out into open rebellion; and one morning the soldiers came down from the hills, carrying the gauger, covered wi' blood, and in a state that ye could hardly ken life in him. One o' the soldiers also was dreadfully bruised about the head, and his sword was broken through the middle. They acknowledged that they had had a terrible battle wi' a party o' smugglers, and rewards were offered for their apprehension. But, though many of our people were then making rapid strides towards depravity, there was none of them so depraved as to sell his neigh-

bour, as Judas did his Master, for a sum of money. None o' us had any great doubts about who had been in the ploy, and some o' our folk werena seen for months after; and, when inquiries were made concerning them, their friends said they were in England, or the dear kens where—places where they could have no more business than wi' the man o' the moon—but when they came back, some o' them were lamiters for life.

The next improvement, as they called it, was the building of a strong, square, flat-roofed house, like a castle in miniature, wi' an iron-stancheled window, and an oak door that might have resisted the attack of a battering-ram. This was intended to be a place of confinement for disorderly persons. A constable was appointed to take care of it, and it often furnished some o' Lucky Riddle's customers with a night's lodgings. Persons guilty of offences were also confined there, until they could be removed to the county jail.

The next thing that followed certainly was an improvement, but it had its drawbacks. It was the erection of a woollen manufactory, in which a great number o' men, women, and bairns, were employed. But they were mostly strangers; for our folk were ignorant of the work, and the proprietor of the factory brought them someway from the west of England. The auld residenters were swallowed up in the influx of new comers. But it caused a great stir about the town, and gave the street quite a new appearance. The factory hadna commenced three months, when a rival establishment was set up in opposition to Lucky Riddle, and one public-house followed upon the back of another, until now we have ten of them. As a matter of course, there was a great deal of more money spent in the village; and several young lads belonging to it, that had served their time as shopkeepers in the county town, came and commenced business in it, some of them beneath their father's

roof, and enlarging the bit window o' six panes—where their mother had exposed thread, biscuits, and gingerbread for sale—into a great bow-window that projected into the street, they there exhibited for sale all that the eye could desire for dress, or the palate to pet it. Yet, with an increase of trade and money, there also came an increase of crime and a laxity of morals, and vices became common among both sexes that were unheard of in my young days. Nevertheless, the evil did not come without a degree of good to counterbalance it; and, in course of time, besides the kirk, the handsome dissenting meeting-house, that ye would observe at the foot of the town, was built. Four schools, besides the parish-school, also sprang up, so that every one had education actually brought to their door; but opposition at that time (which was very singular), instead o' lowering, raised the price o' schooling, and he that charged highest got the genteelest school. Then both the kirk and the meeting-house got libraries attached to them, and Luckie Riddle found the libraries by far the most powerful opposition she had had to contend wi'. Some of the youngsters, also, formed what they called a Mechanics' Institution, and they also got a library, and met for instruction after work hours; and, I declare to ye, that even callants, in a manner, became so learned, that I often had great difficulty to keep my ground wi' them; and I have actually heard some of them have the impudence to tell the dominie that taught them their letters, that he was utterly ignorant of all useful learning, and that he knew nothing of the properties of either chemistry or mechanics. When I was a youth, also, I dinna ken if there was a person in the village, save the minister, kenned what a newspaper was. Politics never were heard tell of until about the year seventy-five or eighty, but ever since then, they have been more and more discussed, until now they have divided the whole town into parties, and keep it in a state of perpetual ferment; and

now there are not less than five newspapers come from London by the post every day, besides a score of weekly ones on the Saturday. Ye see, sir, that even in my time very great changes and improvements have taken place; and I am free to give it as my opinion, that society is more intellectual now than it was when I first kenned it; and, upon the whole, I would say, that mankind, instead of degenerating, are improving. I recollect, that even the street there, ye couldna get across it in the winter season, without lairing knee-deep in a dub; and now ye see, it is all what they call macadamised, and as firm, dry, and durable, as a sheet of iron. In fact, sir, within the last forty years, the improvements and changes in this village alone are past all belief—and the alterations in the place are nothing to what I have seen and heard of the ups, and downs, and vicissitudes of its inhabitants.

The patriarch having finished his account of the village, thus proceeded with the history of the individuals after whom the stranger had inquired.

THE LAIRD.

Ye have asked me if auld Laird Cochrane be still living at the Ha', which, for three centuries, was the glory and pride of his ancestors. Listen, sir, and ye shall hear concerning him. He was born and brought up amongst us, and for many years he was a blessing to this part of the country. The good he did was incalculable. He was owner of two thousand acres of as excellent land as ye would have found on all the Borders; and I could have defied ony man to hear a poor mouth made throughout the whole length and breadth of his estate. His tenants were all happy, weel-to-do, and content. There wasna a murmur amongst them, nor amongst all his servants. He was a landlord amongst ten thousand. He was always devising some new scheme or

improvement to give employment to the poor; and he would as soon have thought of taking away his own life as distressing a tenant. But the longest day has an end, and so had the goodness and benevolence of Laird Cochrane.

It will be eight-and-twenty years ago, just about this present time, that he took a sort of back-going in his health, and somebody got him advised to go to a place in the south that they call Tunbridge Wells—one of the places where people that can afford annually to have fashionable complaints go to drink mineral waters. He would then be about fifty-two years of age; and the distress of both auld and young in the village was very great at his departure. Men, women, and children accompanied him a full mile from the porter's lodge; and when his carriage drove away, there was not one that didna say, "Heaven bless you!" On the Sabbath, also, our minister, Mr Anderson, prayed for him very fervidly.

Weel, we heard no more about the laird, nor how the waters agreed wi' his stomach, for the space of about two months, when, to our surprise, a rumour got abroad that he was on the eve of being married. Some folk laughed at the report, and made light of it; but I did no such thing; for I remembered the proverb, that "An auld fool is the worst of all fools." But, to increase our astonishment, cart-loads of furniture, and numbers of upholsterers, arrived from Edinburgh; and the housekeeper and butler received orders to have everything in readiness, in the best manner, for the reception of their new leddy. There was nothing else talked about in the village for a fortnight, and, I believe, nothing else dreamed about. A clap of thunder bursting out on a New-year's morning, ushering in the year, and continuing for a day without intermission, could not have surprised us more. There were several widows and auld maids in the parish, that the laird allowed so much a-year to, and their dinner every Sunday and Wednesday from the

Ha' kitchen; and they, poor creatures, were in very great distress about the matter. They were principally auld or feckless people; and they were afraid, if their benefactor should stop his bounty, that they would be left to perish. Whether they judged by their own dispositions or not, it is not for me to say; but certain it is, that one and all of them were afraid that his marrying a wife would put an end both to their annuities and the dinners which they received twice a-week from his kitchen.

I dinna suppose that there was a great deal the matter wi' the laird when he went to Tunbridge Wells. Like many others, he wasna weel from having owre little to do. But he had not been there many days, when his fancy was attracted by a dashing young leddy of four or five-and-twenty, the daughter of a gentleman who was a dignitary in the church, but who lived up to, and rather beyond, his income, so that, when he should die, his gay family, of whom he had four daughters, would be left penniless. The name of the laird's intended was Jemima, and she certainly was a pretty woman, and what ye would call a handsome one; but there was a haughtiness about her looks, and a boldness in her carriage, which were far from being becoming in a woman. Her looks and carriage, however, were not her worst fault. She had been taken to the Wells by her mamma, as she termed her mother, for the express purpose of being exhibited—much after the same manner as cattle are exhibited at a fair—to see whether any bachelor or widower would make proposals. Our good laird was smitten, sighed, was accepted, and sealed the marriage contract.

The marriage took place immediately, but he didna arrive at the Ha' wi' his young wife till the following June. When they did arrive, her father, the divine, was wi' them; and, within a week, there was a complete overturning of the whole establishment, from head to foot. They came in two speck-and-span-new carriages, shining like the sun wi' silver

ornaments. They brought also a leddy's-maid wi' them, that wore her veils, and her frills, and her fal-de-rals; and the housekeeper declared that, for the first eight days, she didna ken her mistress from the maid; for miss imitated madam, and both took such airs upon themselves, that the auld body was confounded, and curtsied to both without distinction, for fear of making a mistake. They also brought a man-servant wi' them, that couldna speak a word like a Christian, nor utter a word but in some heathenish foreign tongue. Within a week the auld servants were driven about from the right hand to the left, and from the left to the right. The incomers ordered them to do this and to do that, wi' as much insolence and authority as if he had been a lord and she a leddy.

But, in a short time, the leddy discovered that all the auld domestics, from the housekeeper and butler down to the scullion wench, some of whom had been in the house for twenty years, were little better than a den of thieves; and, at the Martinmas term, a new race of servants took possession of the Ha'. But this was not the only change which her young leddyship and her father brought about within a few weeks. Her nerves could not stand the smell of vegetables, which arose from the kitchen when the broth was cooking for the widows and their families, the auld maidens, and other helpless persons in the village and neighbourhood, on the Sundays and Wednesdays, and she gave orders that the *nuisance* should be discontinued. Thus, sir, for the sake of the gentility and delicacy of her leddyship's organ of smelling, forty stomachs were left twice a-week to yearn with hunger. At that time the labouring men on the estate had seven shillings a-week, with liberty to keep a cow to graze in the plantations; and those that dwelt by the river-side kept ducks and geese, all of which were great helps to them. But her leddyship had an aversion to horned cattle. She never saw them, she said, but she dreamed of

them, and to dream of them was to dream of an enemy! The laird endeavoured to laugh her out of such silly notions, and appealed to her father, the dignitary and divine, to prove that belief in dreams was absurd. His reverence agreed that it was ridiculous to place faith in dreams, but he hinted that there were occasions when the wishes of a wife, though a little extravagant, and perhaps absurd, ought to be complied with; and he also stated, that he himself had seen the cattle in question rubbing against the young trees, and nibbling the tender twigs; besides, there were walks through the plantations, and, as there might be running cattle amongst them, he certainly thought, with his daughter, that the grazing in the woods ought to be discontinued. His authority was decisive. Next day, the steward was commanded to issue an order, that every cottar upon the estate must either sell his cow, or pay for its grass to a farmer.

This was a sad blow to the poor hedgers and ditchers, and those that work with the spade. There was mourning that day in many a cottage—it was equal to taking a meal a-day off every family. But the change that was taking place in their condition did not end there. The divine, like another great and immortal member of the sacred profession —the illustrious Paley—was fond of angling; but there the resemblance between them stopped. I have said that he was fond of angling—but he was short-sighted, and one of the worst fishers that ever cracked off a hook, or raised a splash in the water. Once, when he might have preached upon the text, that he "had toiled all day, and caught nothing," he was fishing on the river, about a mile above where we now are, when he perceived the geese and ducks of a cottager swimming and diving their heads in the stream. It immediately occurred to the wise man that his want of success arose from the geese and ducks destroying all the fish!—and he forthwith prevailed upon his son-in-

law to order his tenants to part with their poultry.* This was another sair blow to the poor cottagers, and was the cause of their bairns gaun barelegged in winter and hungry in summer. The gardens, the avenues, the lodge, everything about the place, was altered. But, to crown all, the lease of three or four of the laird's tenants was out at the following Martinmas, and their rents were doubled. Every person marvelled at the change in the conduct and character of the laird. Some thought he had gone out of his wits, and others that he was possessed by the evil one; but the greater part thought, like me, that he was a silly, henpecked man.

A few months after her leddyship arrived, she gave birth to a son and heir, and there were great rejoicings about the Ha' on the occasion, but very little upon the estate; for already it had become a place that every one saw it would be desirable to leave as soon as possible. As the young birkie grew up, he soon gave evidence of being a sad scapegrace. Never a day passed but we heard of his being in some ploy or other; and his worthy mother said, that it showed a spirit becoming his station in life. Before he had reached man's estate, he was considered to be a great proficient in horse-racing, cock-fighting, fox-hunting, gambling, and other gentlemanly amusements; but as to learning, though he had been at both school and college, I dinna suppose that there is a trades lad connected wi' the Mechanics' Institution here that he was fit to haud the candle to. His grandfather, the divine, sometimes lectured him about the little attention which he paid to his learning, but the young hopeful answered, that "There was no necessity for a gentleman who was heir to five or six thousand a-year, and whose father was seventy years of age, boring over books."

They generally resided in London, and were never about

* Absurd as this may seem, it is a FACT.

the Ha', save during a month or two in the shooting season. We heard, however, that they had fine carryings on in the great city; that they kept up a perpetual course of routes, parties, and assemblies—that the estate was deeply mortgaged; and the laird, from the course of dissipation into which he had been dragged, had sunk into premature dotage. It was even reported that Johnny Grippy, the miser, had advanced several thousand pounds upon the estate, at a very exorbitant interest.

At length their course of extravagance, like a lang tether, came to an end. Creditors grew numerous and clamorous; they would have their money, and nothing but their money would satisfy them. The infatuated auld laird sought refuge in the Abbey at Holyrood; and his son went on racing about and gambling as formerly, borrowing money from John Grippy when down here, and from Jews when in London, and giving them promises and securities that would make the estate disappear, when it came into his possession, like snow in summer. Her leddyship came down to the Ha', and, to my certain knowledge, was refused credit for twenty shillings in a shop in the village here, which was then kept by a son of one of the cottars that she and her father had caused to part wi' their kye and their poultry. This was what the young man called "seeing day about wi' her leddyship."

The auld laird hadna been twelve months in the Abbey, when, finding himself utterly deserted by his wife and son, he sank into despondency, and died in misery; rueing, I will make free to say, that ever he had set his foot in Tunbridge Wells. His young successor, in gratitude to his mother for her over indulgence, and the example she had set him, turned her from the Ha' on his taking possession of it, and left her to seek refuge in the house of her father, the divine; and we never heard of her in this part of the country again. The career and end of the young laird I

will state to ye, as I notice the histories of the minister and Ne'er-do-weel Tam. And now for that of

THE MINISTER.

A more excellent, worthy, and sincere man than Mr Anderson never entered a pulpit, or preached words of hope and consolation to sinners. He was not a flowery orator or a fashionable preacher; but he was plain, simple, nervous, earnest. His homeliness and anxious sincerity riveted the attention of the most thoughtless; and, as a poet says,

"They who came to scoff remain'd to pray."

I remember when he was first placed amongst us as minister of the parish: he was a mere youngster, but as primitive in his manners as if he had just come from the plough instead of a college. His father was a farm-steward upon the estate of the then member for the county; and the patronage being in the crown—as it is called—it was through the interest of the member that he got the kirk. About twelve months after he was placed, he took a wife; and his marriage gave great satisfaction to the whole congregation—at least to the poor and middle classes, who of course were the great majority. And the reason why his marriage gave such satisfaction was, that his wife was the daughter of a poor hind, that he had taken a liking to when he was but a laddie and her a lassie; and he had promised her, when they came from the harvest-field together (for while he was at the college, he always wrought in the harvest-time), that, if he lived, and was spared to be a minister, she should be his wife. I am sorry to say that such promises are owre often neglected by young people, when either the one or the other of them happens to get their head up in the world. But our minister thereby showed that his heart was actuated by right principles, and that he preferred happiness to every mercenary consideration. It showed that he was de-

sirous of domestic comfort, and not ambitious of worldly aggrandisement. She was a bonny, quiet, discreet creature; and, if she hadna what ye may call the manners of a leddy, yet her modesty and good-nature lent an air of politeness to everything she did. Her constant desire to please far more than counterbalanced for her want of being what is called weel-bred; and, if she had not gentility, she had what is of more importance in a preacher's wife—a pious mind, a cheerful and charitable disposition, and a meek spirit; and whatever she was ignorant of, there was one thing she was acquainted with—she

"Knew her Bible true."

But after their marriage, he took great pains in instructing her in various branches of learning; and in that she made great proficiency, I am qualified to give evidence; for, when I have been present at the dinners after the sacramental occasions, I have heard her dispute wi' the ministers upon points of divinity, history, and other matters, and maintain her ground very manfully, if I may say it.

I believe that a happier couple were not to be found in Great Britain. She bore unto him fourteen children, but of these, all save two, a boy and a girl, died in infancy; and in giving birth to the last, the mother perished. It was on a Sunday that she died; and I remember that, on the following Sabbath, her widowed husband entered the pulpit to preach her funeral sermon. His text was, "Why should we mourn as those who have no hope?" He proceeded with his discourse, but every few minutes he paused, he sobbed; the big tears ran down his cheeks; and all the congregation wept with him. At last he quoted the words, "In the morning I preached to the people, and in the evening my wife died!" His heart filled—the tears gushed from his eyes—he could say no more. He sank down on the seat, and covered his face with his hands. Two of the elders went up to the pulpit, and led him to the manse; and

the precentor, of his own accord, giving out a psalm, the congregation sang it and dispersed.

I have mentioned to ye his two surviving bairns—the name of the laddie was Edward, and of the lassie, Esther. Edward was several years older than his sister; and, from his youth upwards, he was a bold, sprightly, fearless callant. Often have I observed him playing the part of a captain, and drilling the laddies of the village into squares and lines, like a little army; and as often have I heard him say, that he would be nothing but a sodger. His father (as every Christian ought to do) regarded war as a great wickedness, and as an abomination that disgraced the earth; he therefore was grieved to see the military bent of his son's inclination, and did everything in his power to break him from it. He believed, and correctly too, that Edward had too much pride to enter the army as a common soldier, where he would be little better than a slave, and have to lift his hat to every puppy that wore an epaulette on his shoulder or a sash round his waist. The minister, therefore, was resolved that he would not advance the money to buy his son a commission.

Here I must notice Johnny Grippy, who had never been kenned to perform a generous action in the whole course of his existence. He was a man that, if he had parted wi' a bawbee, to save a fellow-creature from starvation, wadna, through vexation, have slept again for a week. If ony body had pleaded poverty to him, he would have asked them—"What right they had to be poor?" It would have been more difficult for him to answer—"What right he had to be rich?" Johnny never forgave Mr Anderson for prohibiting him from being made an elder; and, in his own quiet, but cruel way, he said he would see that he got satisfaction, to the last plack, for the insult. Now, what do ye think the miser did? He absolutely offered young Maister Edward money to buy an ensign's commission, at the mo-

derate interest of ten per cent., and on the understanding that he would gie him four years' credit for the interest, and that he wadna request the principal until he was made a captain. This proposal was made for the sole and individual purpose of grieving and afflicting Mr Anderson, and of being revenged on him. The silly laddie, dazzled wi' the bright sword and the gold-laced coat of an officer, and thinking it a grand thing to be a soldier—fancying himself a general, a hero, a conqueror in a hundred fights—swallowed the temptation, took the offered money on the conditions agreed to; and through the assistance of a college acquaintance, the son of a member of parliament, purchased a commission in a foot regiment. All this was done without his father's knowledge; and when Johnny Grippy witnessed the good man's tears as he parted with his son, his cold heart rejoiced that his revenge had been so far successful, and for once he regretted not having parted with his money without a sure bond being made doubly sure.

In a very few weeks after Edward Anderson joined his regiment, he accompanied it abroad; and twelve months had not passed when the public papers contained an account of his having been promoted to the rank of lieutenant on the field, on account of his bravery.

But listen, sir, to what follows.—It was on our fast-day, that the news arrived concerning a great victory in the Indies. We were all interested in the tidings, and the more particularly, as we knew that our minister's son was at the battle. His father and his sister were in a state of great anxiety concerning him, for whether he was dead or living, they could not tell. The weather was remarkably fine, and as a great preacher was to serve some of the tables, and preach during the afternoon's service, the kirk was crowded almost to suffocation, and it was found necessary to perform the ordinances in the open air. A green plot in front of

the manse was chosen for the occasion, and which was capable of accommodating two or three thousand people. It was a grand sight to see such a multitude sitting on the green sward, singing the praises of their Maker, wi' the great heavens aboon them for a canopy! its very glory and immensity rendering them incapable of appreciating its unspeakable magnificence, and rendering as less than the dust in the balance the temples of men's hands. It reminded me of the days of the Covenant, when the pulpit was a mountain side, and its covering a cloud. Mr Anderson was a man whose very existence seemed linked wi' affection for his family. He had had great affection in it, and every death seemed to transfer the love that he had borne for the dead in a stronger degree towards those that were left. His soul was built up in them. All the congregation observed that he was greatly agitated various times during his discourse. It was evident to all that apprehensions for the fate of his son were forcing themselves upon his thoughts.

The postman at that time brought the letters from the next town every day about one o'clock. Mr Anderson was serving the first table, and his face was towards the manse, when the postman, approaching the door, waved his hand towards Miss Esther, who sat near it, as much as to say that he had a letter from her brother. The father's voice failed, through agitation and anxiety, as he saw the letter in the postman's hand, and abruptly concluding his exhortation, he sat down trembling, while his eyes remained as if fixed upon the letter. I myself observed, as the postman passed me wi' it in his hand, that it was sealed wi' black. I regarded it as a fatal omen, and I at first looked towards the minister, to see whether he had observed it; but I believe that his eyes were so blinded wi' tears that he could not perceive it; and I then turned round towards Miss Esther; who I observed hastening to take the letter in her hand.

At the sight of the black seal, she almost fainted upon the ground; and I saw the poor thing shaking as a leaf that quivers in the wind. But when, wi' a hurried and trembling hand, she had broken the seal, she hadna read three lines until the letter dropped upon the ground, and, clasping her hands together, wi' a wild heart-piercing scream, that sounded wildly through the worship of the people, she exclaimed, "My brother!—my brother! and fell wi' her face upon the ground. The spectators raised her in their arms. Her father's heart could hold no longer. He rushed through the multitude—he snatched up the fatal letter. It bore the post-mark of Bengal, but it was not the handwriting of his son. He, too, seemed to read but a line, when he smote his hand upon his forehead, and exclaimed, in agony, "My son! my son!—my poor Edward!"

His gallant boy was one of those who were slain and buried upon the field; and the letter, which was from his colonel, recorded his courage, his virtues, and his death! All the people rose, and sorrow and sympathy seemed on every countenance save one—and that was the face of the auld miser and hypocrite, Johnny Grippy. The body seemed actually to glut, wi' a malicious delight, over the misery and affliction of which he, in a measure, had been the cause; and, though he did try to screw his mouth into a form of pity or compassion, and squeezed his een together to make them water, I more than once observed the twittering streak of satisfaction and delight pass owre his cheeks, just as ye have seen the shadow of a swift cloud pass owre a field of waving grain. I hated the auld miser for his very looks and his attempted hypocrisy; and, forgive me for saying so, but I believe, if at that moment it had been in my power to have annihilated him, I would have done it. The man who does the work of iniquity openly or through error, I would pray for; but he that does it beneath the mask of virtue or religion, I would exterminate.

It was many weeks before Mr Anderson was able to resume his place in the pulpit again; and his daughter, also, took the death of her brother greatly to heart. The whole parish sought to condole wi' them, not even excepting young Laird Cochrane of the Ha', who had not then come to the estate. I firmly believe, sir, that he was a predestinated villain from his cradle, for he showed symptoms of the most disgusting depravity more early than ever laddie did. The aulder he grew, when he was in the country, he went the more about the manse, and Esther was nearly about his own age. She was a lassie that I would call the very perfection of loveliness—simple, artless, confiding, but not without a sprinkling o' woman's vanity. There was a laddie, the son of Thomas Elliot, or Ne'er-do-weel Tam, as he was commonly called, that was very fond of her; he was a fine, deserving callant, and all the town thought she was fond of him. But the young laird put himself forward as his rival, and the one was rich and the other poor. The laird of the Ha' sent daily presents of geese, turkeys, and all sorts of game in their season, to the manse; and he also presented rings, trinkets, and other fine things to Esther; while the other, who was considered a sort of poet in the neighbourhood, could only say, as a sang that I hear them singing now-a-days says—

"My heart and lute are all my store
And these I bring to thee."

The laird was also an adept in flattery, in its most cunningly-devised forms. Now, sir, it is amazing what an effect the use of such means will ultimately produce upon the best-regulated minds. They are like the constant dropping that weareth away a stone. Though unconscious of it herself, Esther, who was but a young thing, began to listen with more patience to the addresses of the heir of the Ha'; and she occasionally exhibited something like dryness and petulance in the presence of poor Alexander Elliot—for such

was his name. At the very first shadow of change upon her countenance, his spirit became bitter wi' jealousy, and he rashly charged her wi' deserting him for the sake of the young laird and the estate to which he was heir. This was a tearing asunder of the silken cords that for years had held their hearts together. He was proud, and so was she —they became distrustful of each other, and at length they quarrelled, and parted never to meet again. I have heard it said, that it was partly to be revenged on Alexander that Esther gave an ear to the addresses of the laird; but that is a subject on which I offer no opinion. All that I know is, that Alexander enlisted, and went out to join his regiment in the West Indies. The laird followed Esther like her shadow; and every one, save myself, said that there would be a marriage between them. Even her worthy father seemed to dream in the golden delusion; and, I am sorry to say, that I believe he was in no small degree the cause of finally breaking off the intimacy between her and Alexander Elliot. She was, as I have informed ye, a sensitive, confiding lassie; and the laird, who had a honeyed tongue, succeeded not only, in the long run, in gaining her affections, but in making her to believe in his very looks; for, being incapable of falsehood herself, she did not suspect it in others, and least of all in those who had obtained a place in her heart.

The young villain went so far as, in her presence, to ask her father's consent to their marriage; and the auld laird being then dead, the minister agreed. It was not long after this, that the scapegrace went to London, and Esther began to droop like a flower nipped wi' a frost. Half-a-dozen times in the day her father found her in tears, and he endeavoured to comfort and to cheer her; but his efforts were unavailing. It pained his heart, which had already been sorely chastened by affliction, to behold the youngling, and last of his flock, pining away before him. The young laird

neither returned nor wrote, and he suspected not the cause of his daughter's grief. The first hint he got of it was from his elders assembled in session. The old man in agony fell back—he gasped, he smote his breast, and tore his grey hairs. In his agony he cried that his Maker had forsaken him! The elders sought to condole wi' him, but it was in vain; he was carried to the manse, and he never preached more. His heart was broken, and, before a month passed, the thread of life snapped also.

Wi' the weight of her own shame and sorrow, and her father's death, poor Esther became demented. About nine weeks after her father's funeral, she gave birth to a still-born child; and it was a happy thing that the infant and its mother were buried at the same time, in the same grave.

Such, sir, is all that it is necessary for me to inform ye concerning our late worthy minister; and of the young laird ye shall hear more presently, in the history of

NE'ER-DO-WEEL TAM.

I never kenned a lad that I entertained a higher regard for than Thomas Elliot. His father left him fifteen hundred pounds, laid out upon a mortgage at five per cent. interest, and bequeathed in such a way that he couldna lift the principal. There was a vast deal of real goodness about his heart—he was frank, liberal, sincere. Every person that kenned him liked him. His first and greatest fault was, that he was owre open; he laid bare his breast, as it were, to the attack of every enemy that chose to hurl a shaft at it. He was a fool for his pains; and, I daresay, he saw it in the end. There was always some person taking the advantage of the frankness of his disposition. But the thing that ruined him, and fixed the by-name on him, was, that he became a sort of fixture in Luckie Riddle's parlour. His chief companion was a lad of the name of William Archbold

—a blithe, singing chield, that was always happy, and ready at onything. Thomas and he were courting two sisters—Jenny and Peggy Lilly—the daughters of a small farmer in the neighbourhood, and both of them were bonny, weel-respected lasses. The folk in this quarter used to call William Archbold *Blithe Willie.* He was a blacksmith to his trade, but quite a youth; and come upon him by night or by day, Willie was sure to be found laughing, whistling, or singing. He hadna a yearly income like Thomas Elliot; and, strange to say, he got the blame of gieing him a howff at Luckie Riddle's. But that was a doctrine which I always protested against; and I said it was much more likely that, as Thomas was fu'-handed, while his neighbour had to work for his bread, the man of money led the blacksmith to their howff, and not the blacksmith the man of money. One thing is certain, that both of them were far oftener at Luckie's than was either good for their health, wealth, or reputation. One night, it seems, after having drunk until, if "they werena fu', they just had plenty," they reeled away to see the two sisters, their sweethearts. Jenny didna wish to quarrel wi' Thomas, because he had the siller; but Peggy turned away wi' scorn from Blithe Willie, and said, that she "never again would speak to one who was no better than a common blackguard, and who neither had regard for himself, nor for any one connected wi' him." What more passed between them I canna tell, but it is said he turned sober in an instant; and, certain it is, that night he left the town, and has never been more heard tell off.

Thomas Elliot and Jenny were married, but she died the second year after their marriage, leaving to his charge an infant son, who was kirsened by the name of Alexander. Thomas, after his wife's death, tried many things (for while she lived she keepit him to rights), but he neglected them all. He began twenty things, and ended nothing.

He was to be found in Luckie Riddle's in the morning, and he was to be seen sitting there at night. Before he was forty, he became a perfect sot; and I used to ask, "Wha leads him away now" The fact was, he was miserable save when he was in company; and, for the sake of company, he would have sat sipping and drinking from sunrise to sunset, without ever perceiving that in that time he had been sitting wi' twenty different companies, each of whom had remained maybe half-an-hour, and left him bibbing there to make a crony of the customer that last came in. But this course of life could not last long. He had mortgaged the mortgage that his father left him, until, although he could not lift it, he had almost swallowed it up; and at the age of forty-four he fell into the grave like a lump of diseased flesh—a thing without a soul!

I have informed ye that he left a son, named Alexander, behind him. He was a laddie that was beloved by the whole town; and it was him that frae bairnhood was set down as the future husband of Esther Anderson, our minister's daughter. I have already told ye how he enlisted, when he fancied that she was drawing up wi' the young laird, and slighting him.

Now, mark ye, sir—for this is one of the most singular things in the history of our village—about three years after the melancholy deaths of Esther and her father, the laird, wi' a pack o' young men as thoughtless and wicked as himself, came down to the Ha'. It was plain as noonday that the murder of a young lassie, her bairn, and her honoured father, had never cost the young libertine a thought. He returned to all his former profligacy, as a sow returns to its wallowing in the mire.

He was returning, towards evening, with three or four of his companions from an otter-hunt, and was within a quarter-of-a-mile of the Ha', when he was met by two strangers —the one a youth, and the other a man of middle age.

"Stand!" cried the young man, sternly.

"What do you want, fellow?" inquired the laird, proudly.

"Dismount," retorted the other, "and take this," presenting to him a pistol. "I come to avenge the murder of Esther Anderson and her father; and," added he, "wi' your blood to wash the bruise ye have inflicted on my wounded heart. Did ye think, because her brave brother was with the dead, that there was none left to revenge the ruin of her innocence? Beneath the very tree where we now stand, she plighted me her first vow, and we were happy as the birds that sang upon its branches, until ye, as a serpent, crossed our path. Dismount, Laird Cochrane, if ye be not coward as weel as villain."

"Alexander Elliot," replied the laird, "are ye not aware that I am a magistrate, and have power to commit ye even now as a deserter. Begone, sir, and take your hand from my horse's head; for it becomes not a gentleman to quarrel wi' such as you."

"Dismount, ye palsy-spirited slave!" cried Alexander, "and choose your weapon and your distance. Let your friends that are wi' you see that ye have fair play. Dismount, or I will shoot ye dead where ye sit." And as he spoke he dragged him from his horse.

It was an awful tragedy to take place in a peaceable corner of the earth like this. The stranger that accompanied Alexander took the pistols, and addressing one of the gentlemen that were wi' the laird, said, coolly, "This business must be settled, sir, and the sooner the better. Choose ye one of these weapons, and let the principals take their ground."

They did take their ground, as it was termed, and their pistols were levelled at each other's heart. Guilt and surprise made the laird to tremble, but revenge gave steadiness to the hand of young Elliot. Both fired at the same moment, and with a sudden groan the laird fell dead upon the ground.

Some said that the earth was weel rid of a prodigal; while others thought it an awfu thing that he should have been cut off in such a manner, in the very middle of his iniquities and career of wickedness; and it was generally regretted that he should have fallen by the hand of a lad so universally respected as Alexander Elliot. Such, sir, was the end of the young laird; but what has become of Alexander is more than any one in these parts can tell. I have just now a few words to say concerning

JOHNNY GRIPPY.

The Grippys were a very remarkable family; and it was a common saying, that they were weel named. There were originally three brothers of them; and when I first kenned them, they were ragged, barelegged callants, but every one of them as keen as a Jew, and as hard as a flinty rock. Two of them were in the cattle line; and, through stinginess, cheatery, and such-like means, they amassed a power of money. But both of them died, and being unmarried, their brother Johnny became sole heir to their property. He was a man that would have walked ten miles to pick up a farthing. He keepit a shop, or what the Americans would call a *store*, in the village, for he sold everything, new and auld, good, bad, and indifferent—eatable and wearable, or for whatever purpose it was wanted; for everything ye could think about was to be had for money at the shop of Johnny Grippy. Of late years, it was weel ascertained that he dealt extensively in sending whisky into England, and in such a way, too, that neither the dirdum, the risk, nor the loss could land at his door. But he had dealings in many concerns, both here and elsewhere. Wherever he heard of anything by which there was money to be made, he always endeavoured to get his finger in. It was affirmed that he was connected wi' some wealthy trading companies

about London, and that he had ships upon the sea. I know for a positive fact, that he went up to the great city every year, and that he actually begged his way there and back again. But it is my opinion that he made the greater part of his wealth by lending out money to usury. By this means a great deal of property fell into his possession, for he was as cruel as a starving tiger. He was a despiser of both justice and mercy, and all he cared about was—"*I maun hae my bargain.*" That was always his answer, if onybody offered to intercede wi' him for ony poor creature that he was distressing.

The auld knave endeavoured to cover his avarice wi' the cloak o' religion, and, as I have already informed ye, sought to be made an elder; and, as ye have been made aware, he never forgave our late worthy minister for the slight and disappointment, but, even against his nature, parted wi' money to obtain a cruel revenge. It would tire you, if I were to inform you of the one-thousandth part of Johnny's meanness, and the instances of his ravening avariciousness, or the misery which he caused in the habitations of both high and low. Indeed, I may say, that he grew rich through the ruin of others; and he sought out objects of misery on which he might fix his devouring talons, even as a vulture seeketh out a dead carcase.

At an enormous interest, he lent money to the auld laird; and he cunningly permitted the interest to accumulate, year after year, until the laird's death. He also advanced sums to the young laird at a rate even more usurious, and got the entire title-deeds of the estate into his hands as security; and when the laird fell in the duel wi' Alexander Elliot, he seized and took possession of Ha' estate, and all that was thereon, claiming them as his! The whole parish was thunderstruck wi' astonishment.

The next kin to the young laird threatened to throw the case into the Court of Chancery.

"Let them," said Johnny, laughing in his sleeve, "they will live lang that live to see it settled there—and *I will hae my bargain.*"

Weel, the case was thrown into Chancery, and Johnny did not live to see it settled, for settled it is not until this day, and what some one said of eternity might be said of it —it is "beginning to begin."

I think ye heard that John had acquired a habit of slipping owre to Luckie Riddle's on the edge of his foot for a dram before breakfast. He took a strong liking for her strong bottle, and by way of saving the expense of the dram, he left off the practice of taking a breakfast; and when the single dram increased to two and three in the day, he confined himself to one meal, and that of the poorest and scantiest kind—a potato and salt, or maybe a herring as a luxury. But it was more than suspected that the potatoes on which he lived were not all honestly came by; for I myself have seen him in a field amongst other folks', stooping down and fingering at the drills, and slipping the potatoes into his coat-pocket; and when asked what he was doing, he would have said (quite collectedly, for there was no possibility of confusing him), "Ou, I am just looking what sort of crop such-a-one is going to have this year."

But the miser's love of drink increased upon him, and the more he spent on liquor, the more he hungered himself. He became a living skeleton, and in the depth of a severe winter, he was found sitting dead behind his desk, with the copy of a letter before him, in which he had instructed his man of business to sell off, immediately, the husband of Peggy Lilly."

"The husband of Peggy Lilly!" interrupted the stranger, who had hitherto listened to the records of the Patriarch in silence—"who was he?"

"That," resumed the old man, "seems to interest you, and wherefore I cannot divine, as I have no recollection of

your face; but, if ye have patience and hearken, ye shall hear all that I can tell ye of the history of

PEGGY LILLY.

"Peggy was allowed to be the bonniest lass in all the parish; but she was as prudent and sedate as she was bonny, and everybody wondered that she keepit company wi' William Archbold sae lang as she did, after he had gien himself up to a habit o' dissipation; though she, perhaps, thocht as I did, that it was mere thochtlessness in the young man, that he was just drawn awa by his friend, Thomas Elliot, and that, if he were married, he would reform. Luckie Riddle's sign, however, was a black sight to him, and I doot it has been a heart-sore to puir Peggy. The difference that the subject gave rise to between them, was perhaps unlucky for the happiness o' baith parties. In the vexation o' the moment, she uttered words o' harshness which her heart did not dictate, and, in leaving as he did, he acted rashly.

When we heard, however, of William Archbold's having left the town, and the cause of his leaving—that it arose from Peggy having spoken to him as if disgusted at his conduct—we laughed, and said he would soon come back again. She thought the same thing; but weeks and months succeeded each other, and now five-and-twenty years have passed, and the lad has been no more heard of. How deeply Peggy grieved for her conduct, and mourned his absence, was visible in her countenance.

About ten years after her sister's death, her parents, who had both become very frail, were thrown out of their bit farm, after several very unfortunate seasons in it, and they were left entirely dependent upon her exertions for their support. They were reduced to very great straits, and many a time it was a wonder to me how they lived; but late and early did she toil for their maintenance: and,

poor hizzy, the sorrow that fell upon her face for the loss of William Archbold never left it.

At that time a very decent man, who had taken a small farm in the neighbourhood, began to pay attention to her, and often called at her father's house. She heard his request, that she would marry him, wi' a sigh—for she hadna forgotten Blithe Willie. But her father and mither looked at her, wi' the tears in their een, and they besought her night and day, that they might see her settled and provided for. She at length yielded to their solicitations, and gied him her hand; but she was candid enough to confess to him, that her affection couldna accompany it, though her respect and duty should.

So far as the world could judge, they seemed to live happily together, and Peggy made an exemplary wife; but there was always like a quiet settled melancholy on her countenance. Their farm was too dear taken, and about a year after they were married, it became the property of Johnny Grippy. Ye have already heard what sort of man he was, reaping where he had not sown. He exacted his rent to the last farthing, or without ceremony paid himself double from the stock upon the farm.

Peggy's husband became unable, though he struggled early and late, to make up his rent, and having fought until his strength was exhausted, and his health and heart broken, he sank down upon his bed, a dying man; and Johnny, causing the sheriff's-officer to seize all that was upon the farm, made them seize also the very bed upon which the dying man lay. He in fact died in their hands; and Peggy was turned out upon the world, a friendless widow, with two helpless infants at her knee; and a sore, sore fight she has had to get the bite and the sup for them, poor things, from that day to this.

"But," replied the stranger, with emotion, "there is one left who will provide for her and her children."

"Who may that be?" inquired the patriarch.

"William Archbold," answered the other.

"Preserve us!" said the old man, in surprise; "I daresay I have been blind not to have recognised ye before—ye are William!"

"I am," replied the other—"Blithe Willie, as you once termed me. Peggy's cutting and just rebuke roused my pride, and filled me with self-abasement at the same instant. In a state of mind bordering on madness, I left the village, where I considered my character to be blasted for ever. I went to London, and there engaged to go out to India. I was there fortunate in business, and in a few years became rich. I there, some years ago, discovered Alexander Elliot (the son of my old companion), whose regiment had gone to the East, and not to the West Indies, as you supposed. I purchased his discharge, and employed him as a clerk. He requested permission to visit this country, and it was granted; but I knew not the deadly nature of his errand. It was during that visit that he so fatally avenged the ruin of poor Esther. He is again in India, and prospering. But you say that Peggy has been married—that she is a widow—a widow!"

"Yes; a widow, sir," answered the patriarch; "and if ye be single, I think ye canna do better than make her a wife."

"No, no!" said William, drawing his hand across his eyes; "I cannot; I will not glean where another has reaped. But here is a bank-order for five hundred pounds; let it be conveyed to her; but let her never know the hand from whence it came."

"Hoots! nonsense, Maister William!" said the old man. "See her again, for auld langsyne, at ony rate, and gie her it yersel."

What course William Archbold would have adopted I cannot tell; but at that moment Peggy passed down the

street, and spoke to the old man as she passed. William started to his feet, he stretched out his hand, he exclaimed, "Peggy!"

She was speechless—tears gushed into her eyes. Old love, it is said, soon kindles a ain. Be this as it may, within six weeks Peggy left the village in a coach as the wife of William Archbold, and her children accompanied her

THE OLD CHRONICLER'S TALES

THE DEATH OF JAMES I.

THE scrupulous, we might almost say affected, regard for what they conceive to be historical truth, on the part of many historians, leading them to admit nothing into their veritable histories but what has been "proven," and proven in such a manner as to please themselves, has been productive of at least this effect—that many a fact in history has been consigned to the regions of fable and romance, because supported only by that evidence which has hanged millions of God's creatures—namely, the testimony of witnesses. The weight of tradition, often the very best and truest evidence, in so far as it combines experience and faith, is, in the estimation of historiographers, overbalanced by a fragment of paper, provided it be written upon, and the writing be formed after some old court-hand or black-letter style; though, after all, the valued antiquarian scrap, formed by the operation of one goose quill, moved by one hand, and that hand impelled by the mind of one frail mortal, may be merely a distorted relic of that very tradition which is so much despised. We do not profess to be fastidious in the selection of authorities. Tradition, in our opinion, ought to be tested by the experience of mankind: where it stands that test, it ought to be received as a part of veritable history; and sure we are that, if by this mode anything may be thought to be lost in point of strict truth, it will be well balanced by what is gained in point of amusement. It is upon these principles we have selected, and now lay before our readers, an account of a well-known

catastrophe of Scottish history, much more full in its details than any that has yet been offered to the public.

In the beginning of the winter 1436, Sir Robert Graham (whose nephew, Patrick Graham, had been married to the daughter of David, Earl of Strathearn, and who himself bore that dignity) appeared at the royal residence of Walter Stuart, Duke of Athol, his kinsman (the latter being uncle to Patrick, Earl of Strathearn's wife), in a state of disguise. The night was far advanced when he arrived, and the duke was called from his bed to see the visiter, who had been for some time under the ban of the stern authority of his sovereign, James I. The duke knew well what was the main object of the knight, though he was entirely ignorant of the special intelligence that the latter had to communicate to him. They met in the large wainscoted hall, which in brighter days had resounded to the merry sounds of the wassail of King Robert's sons, but which, ever since the accession of the reigning king, had echoed nothing but the sighs and groans of the persecuted victims of James' vengeance against all the relatives and supporters of the unfortunate house of Albany. The duke and the knight were now both old men, though the former was much in advance of the latter; they were both grandfathers—the grandson of the duke being Sir Robert Stuart, chamberlain to the king, and the grandson of the latter being Malise Graham, who had been disinherited of his Earldom of Strathearn by the unwise policy of the monarch; but old and grey-headed as they were, they, true to the character of the age in which they lived, retained that fierce spirit of vengeance which was held one of the cardinal virtues of the creed of nobility and knighthood of that extraordinary period.

As the duke entered the hall, which was lighted only by a small lamp that stood on the oaken table at which the inhabitants of the castle dined, he required to use well both

his eyes and his ears, obtuse as his external senses had become by age, before he was apprised of the situation occupied by the knight, who, musing over his schemes of revenge, did not observe the duke enter. He was roused from his reverie by the hand of his old friend, applied by way of slap to his shoulder, as if for the purpose of wakening him from sleep—a power that seldom overcomes the restless spirit of vengeance.

"The arm of King James," said the duke, "reaches farther than mine, and a smaller light than that glimmering taper, that twinkles so mournfully in this ancient hall of the Stuarts, enables him to see farther than is now permitted to these old eyes; and yet you are here on the very borders of the Lowlands, and within a score miles of the court, where the enemy of our families holds undisputed sway. Are you not afraid of the Heading-hill of Stirling, which still shows the marks of the blood of the murdered Stuarts?"

"I have come from the fastnesses of the north," said Graham, as he took off his plaid, which was covered with snow, to shake it, and exhibited a belt well stored with daggers and hunting-knives—"I have come from my residence among the eagles, like one of the old grey-headed birds with which I am become familiar, to warm the cold blood of a mountain life with some of the warm stream that nerves the arms of my enemies of the valley."

"Or rather," replied the duke, smiling, "you have come to ask an old fox, with a head greyer than that of an eagle, to hunt with you, and guide you to the caves of your foes; but you have destroyed your scheme of vengeance, by advising your principal enemy of your intention. Why, speaking seriously, did you write such an epistle to the king? You have lived among your grey-headed friends to little purpose, when you have used one of their feathers as an instrument for telling your victim that another is to fledge the arrow that is to seek his heart's blood. Such an act may

be said to be noble, when the avenger is to give his enemy a fair chance for his life; but that you do not intend to do, for your vengeance (which must be glutted in secret, if it is to be glutted at all) is not to be stayed by the forms of the laws of chivalry. James is now on his guard. You have told him you intend to slay him—and slay him now if you can!"

"And, by the arms of the Grahams of Kincardine, I *will*, Athol—I *will*, I *shall!* Is it your grace who would dissuade me from my purpose of revenge, merely because the fire is so furious that it sent forth a gleam on the victim that is destined to feel its scorching heat?—you, who have within these few minutes brought up to our burning imaginations the bloody scene of the Heading-hill of Stirling, whereon perished so many of your kinsmen—you, whose dukedom has been first wrested from you, and then bestowed on you in *liferent*, because you are *old*—you who should" (here he spoke into the ear of the duke) "be *king!*" —pausing. "Who does not know that Robert III., your brother, was born out of lawful wedlock? His father never married Elizabeth More; but who could doubt that Euphemia Ross, your mother, the widow of the famous Randolph, was joined to him in lawful wedlock? The people of Scotland know this, and they are sick of the bastard on the throne"—pausing again, and looking earnestly at the duke through the gloom of the large hall. "Is it to be tolerated that legitimacy is to be longer trampled under foot by bastardy? Too long have you overlooked your right of blood; but it is not yet too late for ample amends. The usurper has done all in his power, by oppressing you and slaying your friends, to force you to assert and vindicate your indefeasible right, and gratify a legitimate revenge. In these veins," seizing the old man's shrivelled wrist, "runs the blood of *the Bruce!* What a thought is that!—what heart could resist its impulse? what brain its fire?"

After whispering, with great earnestness, this speech into the ear of the old duke, Graham paused again, and looked at him. The words had produced the effect which they might have been expected to produce on the mind of one who had long dreamed over the same thoughts and purposes, and been fired by the same feelings, but who had been prevented, by unmanly fears, from obeying the dictates of his judgment, the call of his ambition, and the spur of revenge. The energetic manner in which the old fancies had been roused by the wily Graham threw him into a reverie, the result of which the knight did not think fit to wait. He had already, to a certain extent, succeeded in stimulating the lethargy of age, and sending through the shrivelled veins of the scion of royalty the blood that owned the influence of the passion-struck heart; it was now his purpose to keep the ground he had gained, and push for more; and as the duke still stood muffled up in his morning-gown, and his chin upon his folded arms, the tempter proceeded—

"Your grace has often declared to me," he continued, "that you have faith in our Highland seers, and believe the sounds of the *taisch*, as given forth by the inspired visionary."

"Who can doubt these things?" replied the old duke, looking seriously, and continuing his musing position. "I certainly never had the hardihood. I have seen too many instances of their verification, to be sceptical on that head. The fate of the family of Albany was foretold by a seer many months before the execution of Duke Murdoch and his sons. But what has this to do with my persecution, or with my being king of Scotland? God knows, I have at this moment visions enough!—your remarks have roused my sleeping mind; yet I could almost say I dream."

"This dark hall, that little flickering lamp, and my presence at this late hour, may well produce an illusion; but I

deal in no fancies. I have only truths to tell, and deeds to do—ay, and such deeds as may well cross the rapt eyes of the seer; Scotland has not seen such for many a day, sad and sorrowful as have been the fates of her kings. Will your grace hear *your* fate from the lips of a seer?"

"I would rather hear that of my enemy, who rules this kingdom with a rod of iron," replied the duke.

"You will hear the fates and fortunes of both," said Graham—"ay, even as is seen the scales of justice, which, as the beam moves, lifts one, only to depress the other. If you will accompany me to a shepherd's hut, back among your own hills of Athol, you will hear what time has in store for you and King James."

"I will," replied the duke, anxiously; "but age requires rest. I was hunting all day, and feel weary. Let us postpone our visit till to-morrow evening."

"Ah!" cried Graham, "the *hunter* may say he is wearied, but the *hunted* has no title to speak the language of nature. If we go at all, we must go *now*. The visions of the seer come on him during night. At the solemn hour of midnight, futurity is revealed to him—to the hunted outlaw, whose bed is among the heather, there is not vouchsafed the ordinary certainty of seeing even another sun. Come, dress—I will lead your grace's horse through the hills. We have no time to lose—the old enemy is beforehand with us, and our grizzled locks mock the tardiness of our revenge. Come!"

"My weakness leaves me under the charm of your words, Graham," said the old duke. "Tell Malcolm to get my horse in readiness; meanwhile, I will dress, and be presently with you."

The duke went up to his bedroom, and Graham sought the servant, who proceeded to obey his directions. He came again back to the hall, and folding his arms, walked to and fro. muttering to himself, stopping at times, and

raising his hand in a menacing attitude, as if he were wholly engrossed by one feeling of revenge, and then resuming his musing attitude. The duke, dressed, belted, and muffled up in a large riding-cloak, again roused him from his reverie. They proceeded to the courtyard, where the duke mounted, and Graham, taking the bridle into his hand, took the horse away into a by-path that led to the hills. After proceeding forward for about an hour in the dark, they observed a small light glimmering in the distance, and coming apparently from the window of some cottage. For this Graham made as directly as the unevenness of the ground would permit; and in a short time they arrived at the door of the small dwelling, from the window of which the beam of light shot out amongst the darkness, suggesting the idea of life, and probably some of its comforts (at least a fire), amidst the dead stillness of a winter night in so dreary a situation.

At the door of this cottage, Graham rapped in a peculiar manner; and without a word being spoken, it was opened by a young man clad in the Highland garb. The two friends entered. The scene presented to them was the ordinary appearance of a mountain hut in those days: a small fire of peats burned in the middle of the apartment, and sent out the light which, beaming through the small aperture in place of a window, had attracted the eyes of the guests. In a corner, a small truckle-bed stuffed with heather, part of which protruded at the side and end, and covered with a coarse blanket or two, contained an old woman, with a clear, active eye, which twinkled in the light of the fire, and moved with great rapidity as she scanned narrowly the persons of the guests. In another corner was the bed of the young Highlander, composed simply of a collection of heather, and without blanket or covering of any kind. The guests seated themselves on two coarse stools that stood by the fire; holding their

hands over the flame, to receive as much as possible of the heat to thaw their limbs, which the freezing night air, co-operating with their advanced years, had stiffened and be-numbed. While they were engaged in this preliminary but indispensable operation, the young man, who appeared restless and confused, placed another stool before the bed of the old woman, so that, when seated upon it, his back would be supported by the side of the bed, and his face in some degree concealed from the gaze of the guests, who, be-ing on the other side of the peat fire, could, through the as-cending smoke, see him only indistinctly and at intervals.

With the exception of a few words that had passed between the young Highlander and Graham—and which, being in Gaelic, were not understood by the royal duke, who, though formerly Lord of Brechin, and resident in the north, had been too long in leaving the royal residence of his father, Robert II., to acquire the language—there was nothing for some time said. The guests continued their manual applications to the peat fire, and the young Gael, who had for some time been seated on his stool, threw himself occasionally back on the fore part of the bed, then brought himself forward again, and at intervals muttered quickly some words in Gaelic, accompanied with sounds of wonder and surprise, from all which he suddenly relapsed into quietness and silence. While these strange operations were going on, Graham directed the attention of the duke to the uncouth actor, and whispered something in his ear which had the effect of rousing him, and making him look anxiously through the smoke, to get a better view of the strange gestures of the youth. The old woman in the bed made, in the meantime, efforts as if she intended to speak; but these were repressed by a sudden motion of the youth, whose hand, slipped back, was applied as secretly as possible to her mouth, and then, in a menacing attitude, clenched and shaken in her face.

"Is your hour come yet, Allan?" said Graham, in a deep and serious voice.

"He says no," answered the old woman, with a sharp, clear voice, from the bed, translating the Gaelic response of the youth; "but he sees signs o' an oncome."

"Is it to be a mute vision, Allan?" again said Graham; "or see you any signs of a *taisch?*"

"He thinks," said the woman again, as translator, "he will see again the face and feir o' a dead king, wha will speak wi' sobs and granes o' him wha will come after him, and sit in the browden and burniest ha' o' Scone's auld palace, whar he will be crowned."

Silence again succeeded the clear notes of the woman's voice; the young man's movements and gestures recommenced; and the old duke's attention was riveted by the strange proceedings which, to an absolute believer in the powers of the seer, were fraught with intense interest. The prophetic paroxysm seemed to approach more near: the body of the seer was bent stiffly back, and leaned on the bed; his eyes were wide open, and fixed upon a mental object; his hands were extended forth; his lips were apart; and every gesture indicated that state of the mind when, under the influence of a rapt vision, it takes from the body its nervous energy, and leaves the limbs as if under the power of a trance.

He remained in this condition for fully five minutes; and then, throwing his arms about, he cried out some quickly-uttered words in Gaelic, which the old woman translated into—"It comes! it comes!" After a pause of a few minutes, during which the most death-like silence prevailed throughout the cottage, he began to move his hands slowly through the air, from right to left, as if he were following the progress of a passing creation of the mind; and, as he continued this movement, he spoke, in a deep, tremulous voice, with a kind of mournful, singing

cadence, the Gaelic words, which were continually translated by the old woman.

"There comes slowly, as if frae the womb o' a cloud o' mountain mist, the seim o' a turreted abbey, wi' the tomb o' the Bruce and the monuments o' other kings, amang which a new grave, wi' the moul o' centuries o' rotten banes lying on its edge, and mixed wi' the skulls o' dead kings, and arm-banes that ance bore the sceptre o' Scotland! —It is gane!—the seim has vanished, and my eye is again darkened!"

A deep silence succeeded, and lasted for several minutes. The speaker's hands again began to move from right to left, and slowly-uttered words again came from his lips!

"The cloud throws back its misty faulds, and shows the wraith o' a gowd-graithit bier, movin to the wast; the Scotch lion is on the lid, and a shinin halbrik, owre whilk waves the royal pennon o' Scotland, begirt wi' gowd, is carried afore, by the king-at-arms. A warlock, auld and shrivelled, wi' a white beard, touches wi' his wand the coffin; the lid lifts, and the head o' a king, wi' a leaden crown, rises frae the bier! A *taisch!* a *taisch!*—hark! the lips o' the dead open and move, and he speaks the weird that never deceives! '*Hail, Walter, King o' the Scots!*'"

This extraordinary statement was accompanied by a kind of yell or scream, that rung through the cottage, and pierced the ears of the listeners. Silence again followed, and lasted several minutes, during which the seer was quiet. The duke was apparently entranced, and Graham looked wonder and surprise. The seer began again to move his hands, and speak as before.

"The cloud throws back its misty faulds, and my eye follows the seim o' the royal chair o' Scone, wherein sits" (a loud scream of surprise broke from the seer) "Walter, Lord o' Brechin that was, Duke o' Athol that is—King o' Scotland that will be!"

These words were no sooner uttered, than the duke started from the stool on which he sat, and showed strong indications of surprise and confusion. His belief in the predictions of a seer was, as was common in that age, unbounded; and when he heard himself pronounced King o' Scotland, his mind, freed from all manner of scepticism or doubt, reverted to the circumstance of the doubtful legitimacy of his half-brothers; the aspirations and day-dreams he had so long indulged seemed in an instant to have received the stamp of truth; the prospect of having his ambition at last gratified, by wearing the crown which his enemy now bore, inflamed his mind, and the coldness and lethargy of old age seemed to have been supplanted by the fire and energy of youth.

"Is the vision complete?" said he to the old woman, as he saw the seer gradually regaining his upright position, and resuming his natural manner, like one who had come out of a fit.

"Ay," replied she. "Allan is himsel again; but, if ye are the Duke o' Athol, as I tak ye to be, I could rede ye, before our reddin, never mair, aiblins, to meet on this side o' time, something that wad make your auld een glimmer through the smeik o' that ingle mair swith and deftly than could a' the visions o' the seers o' Scotland."

Graham looked alarmed at this unexpected speech of the old woman; and Allan, the seer, slipping gently his hand behind her back, stopped her mouth, and produced silence. The duke and Graham left the cottage--the latter exhibiting a wish that the former should not remain longer, after the object was attained for which they had made their visit. They returned in the same way they had come; and for some time the duke was so much occupied with the thoughts of the extraordinary vision he had got declared to him, that he rode forward, still led by Graham, without uttering a word. The night was, if possible, darker than it was when

they left the castle; and the stillness of a lazy fall of snow reigned among the hills, unbroken by a single sound, even of the night-birds.

"It is then ordained above," said the duke at last, in a low tone—"my lot is already cast among the destinies, and all the dreams of a long life are at last to be realised. I can scarcely believe that I have been awake for this last hour; yet what can be more certain than that I am now suffering the cold of these hills, a bodily feeling which dreams cannot simulate? 'Walter, King of Scotland!' Ha! it sounds as well as James—we are both the first of our name. It is tardy justice, but it is justice accompanied by retribution; and when is the blood too thin and cold to feed the fire of revenge? When do the pulses of the old heart cease to quicken at the thought of a just retribution? When is the head too bald to bear a crown lined with purple velvet? My spirits, frozen by age and this cold night, are thawed by the fire of these visions of vengeance, and dance in the wild array of youthful delight. Ha! he took from me the fee of my dukedom, and gave me, because I was *old*, the usufruct, the liferent: I shall now have the usufruct of a *kingdom—his* kingdom by courtesy, *mine* by right. Hark, Graham! How is this vision to be realised? The seer pointed to James's death—who is to kill the tyrant?"

"I with this hand shall strike the blow," replied Graham. "My plans are already laid, and I wanted only your co-operation and assistance; for why, you know, should I be so improvident as to kill one king, until another is ready to take his place?"

"I cannot speak lightly of this affair," said the duke, in check of Graham's levity. "What are your plans? The fewer co-operators in a conspiracy the better."

"I know it," replied Graham. "Your grandson, Sir Robert Stuart, whom James has foolishly retained as chamberlain, while he has taken from him his chance of succeed-

ing you in your dukedom, waits for your command to give us access to the royal chamber. The king is to celebrate the Christmas holidays at the monastery of the Dominicans in Perth; he comes to the point of our dagger, held by a hand nerved by a thousand wrongs, to plunge it into his bosom. I can command the services of Sir John Hall, and Christopher and Thomas Chambers, who cry for revenge for the murder of their master Albany; three hundred caterans are at my service, ready to do the work of death at my bidding; and all that was required to complete my schemes was the consent of your grace, now happily obtained, to the act which is to right you, to revenge you, to crown you."

"If the king is to be at Perth," replied the duke, after a pause, "I shall be at the revels of Christmas. My grandson Sir Robert, who, as chamberlain, may be said to be the keeper of the king, can let your three hundred caterans into the monastery, and the work may be finished with a facility which seldom attends the execution of the purposes of revenge."

"Your grace has anticipated my very thoughts and words," replied the wily Graham. "Heaven aids the work of a just retribution on the head of the tyrant. Mark the supernatural coincidences. When was the vision of the seer presented to the living senses of the avenger of his own and his country's wrongs—the executioner of a tyrant, and the successor who is to occupy his throne—as if to urge him to his duty? When did the groaning victims of royal cruelty get a chamberlain to turn for them the key of the tyrant's sleeping room? And when were the suspicions of remorse and guilt of the wrong-doer so opportunely lulled, as to give room to a confidence which brings him to the dagger's point?"

"Walter, King of Scotland!" ejaculated the duke, who, during Graham's speech, had been musing over the sudden

change in his fortunes. "Ha! how many acts shall I have to repeal! how many nobles to right! how many wounds to bind up of my bleeding country! Graham, you shall be Earl of Menteith, and your grand-nephew, Malise, shall have, instead of that earldom, his own Strathearn. How my mind burns with the thoughts of turning wrong into right, and taking the weight of the royal sceptre out of the scales of justice!"

By this time, the pair had arrived again at the palace of Athol. Their plans were completed: the duke retired to dream of his crown and sceptre, and Graham returned to seek a heather bed, in his retreat, beyond the reach of his enemies.

Some time after, he met Allan, the seer, whose surname was Mackay, among the hills. The Gael had apparently gone in quest of his employer, and seemed to have some important object to attain, by travelling so far as he had done to meet him.

"I peg your honour's pardon," said the seer, as he came up to Graham; "te katherans are to pe at te red stane in te howe o' te hills, on te saxth. I hae seen a' te praw fallows, wha are as keen for te onset as te eagles o' Shehallion. Ye will meet them, dootless, and keep up the fire o' their pluid, pe te three grand powers—te speeches, te peat-reek, and te pay. Hoo did I manage te duke? Te play was weel played, your honour, though Allan Mackay pe te man who says it; and te mair's my credit, that I never pefore acted to seer in presence o' te son o' a king. Ugh—ugh! put it was a praw performance, and ane that deserves to pe weel paid for. Hoo muckle did your honour promise to gie me for my remuneration? Te sum has clean escaped my memory."

"It was five merks, Allan," said Graham.

"I peg your pardon, your honour," said Allan. "It was shust exactly seven; and little aneugh, seein I had my

mither's mouth to keep close, for fear she wad peach te secret to te duke, pesides te grand story o' Dumferlin Appey, and te funeral, and te taisch, and te Palace o' Scone, to invent and perform. King Shames's actors are petter paid for performin his 'Peebles to te Play.' Maybe your honour can pay me te seven merks shusht now?"

"I cannot quarrel with you, Allan," said Graham; "but our bargain was five. Here's your own sum, however. Since that night, I have had apprehensions about your mother's steadfastness. You must watch her, and prevent her from going from home. Women have been the ruin of all plots, since the beginning of the world."

"That was shust what I was to speak aboot, next after the payment, your honour," said Allan. "She's awa owre the hills already, Cot knows whar."

"What!" cried Graham, in great agitation—"has she gone away without your knowledge, and without telling you whither she was going?"

"That's shust the very thing I hae to inform ye o'," replied the phlegmatic Gael. "Te last time I saw her was on Wednesday morning, when she was warstlin wi' the winds that plaw ower te tap o' te hill o' Gary. A glint o' te risin sun showed me her red cloak as it fluttered in te plast, and, in a moment after, a' my powers o' the second sight couldna discover her. But we've ae satisfaction; she's no awa to the duke. Put maybe" (turning up his eye slyly) "she's awa to King Shames. I would fóllow her, and pring her pack, put I require te seven merks I hae got frae your honour for other necessary occasions, and purposes, and necessities; and a pody canna travel in the Lowlands, whar there's nae heather to sleep on, without pawpees."

"Death and fury!" cried the agitated Graham, "are all my long-meditated schemes of revenge, are the concerted purposes for cutting off a tyrant and righting a nation, to

be counteracted by the wag of an old woman's tongue? Allan" (lowering his voice), "you must after your mother —dog her through hill and dale, highway and city vennel; seize her, by force or guile; prevent her from seeking the presence of the king, or those who may have the power of communicating with him; and get her back to her cottage, on the peril of all our lives. Here's money for you" (giving him a purse), "and here is a passport to the confidence of Sir Robert Stuart, the king's chamberlain, one of our friends, who will co-operate with you in preventing her from approaching the royal presence."

"She's a Lowlander, your honour," said Allan, putting the money in his pocket; "and maybe she's awa to see her praw freends o' the south, whar she gaes ance a-year, shust about this time; put, to oplige, and favour, and satisfy your honour, I'll awa doon te Strath o' te Tay; and, if I dinna find her wi' her relations in Dundee, there may be some reason, and occasion, and authority for your honour's apprehension, and for my crossin te Tay and te Forth, to prevent her frae payin her respects to Shames, whilk she wad think nae mair o' doin than o' speakin in te way she did to te Duke o' Athol."

"Away—away, then!" cried Graham; "and remember that your head's at stake as well as that of the best of us. So look to yourself."

Graham went away to an appointed place, where he was to meet Sir John Hall, who was to accompany him to the meeting of the caterans, and Allan went back to the cottage, and, taking out some necessaries, proceeded to Strath Tay. He arrived at the town of Dundee next evening; and, having ascertained that his mother had crossed over to Fife, had no doubt that she was away to Edinburgh for the purpose of communicating to King James what she knew of the conspiracy of the north. He therefore also crossed the Tay, proceeded through Fife, and, after considerable delay,

produced by ineffectual inquiries after an old woman in a red cloak, he arrived in Edinburgh on the third day after he had set out from his cottage. He had procured no trace of his mother, and all his wanderings and searchings through the Scottish metropolis were unavailing—he could neither see nor hear of her; and he therefore resolved to wait upon Sir Robert Stuart, to put him on his guard, lest she might, by her cunning, escape also his notice, and get access to the king by means of some subtle story told to the usher. He had no difficulty in getting access to Sir Robert, who was, about that time, too much occupied with secret messengers from the seat of the conspiracy in which he had engaged, to hesitate an instant about consenting to see the Gael, who, he doubted not, came from Sir Robert Graham, or his grandfather, the duke—both, he knew, deeply engaged in the secret affair. Having been admitted, Allan, as he walked up to the end of the apartment where Sir Robert was seated, looked cautiously around; and, seeing no one near, assumed an attitude and demeanour somewhat bolder, but still suited to the secresy of his message.

"Has your honour seen an old woman in a red cloak, apoot te precincts o' te king's residence?" said he, in a whispering tone, as he slipped Graham's token—a piece of paper with ciphers on it—into Sir Robert's hand.

"Sir Robert has himself written me about that beldam," said the chamberlain. "She is in our secret, I understand —an extraordinary instance of imprudence, which I must have explained to me. Meantime, the danger must be averted. I have not seen her. Have you, sir?"

"No," answered Allan. "I wish I could get a climpse o' her. It's te very thing I want. She would never see te face o' te king, if she ance crossed my path—tamn her!"

"What would ye do with her?" inquired the chamberlain, eagerly. "I wish we could get her out of the way. You know what I mean; a sum of money is of no import-

ance in comparison of security—real, absolute, undoubted security—from this plague. You understand me?" And he touched his sword, to make himself better understood.

"Understand ye!—ugh, ugh, your honour," cried the Gael, "there was nae occasion for touchin te sword; your words are sharp aneugh for gettin to my intellects. You mean" (whispering in the chamberlain's ear) "that for a praw consideration and remuneration, I might kill te auld hag. Eh! isn't that it, your honour?"

"Supposing, but not admitting, that that was my meaning," said the chamberlain, cautiously, "what would you say to the proposition?"

"Say to't, your honour!" said Allan. "Ugh! ugh! Let your honour say te word and pay te remuneration, and te auld harridan is dead twa hoors after I get a climpse o' her. Of course" (looking knowingly into the chamberlain's face), "your honour would protect me till I got to te hills. Te work itsel is naething—an auld wife's easy kilt—it's no pe tat te remuneration should be measured—it's pe te risk o' hangin. Was it ten merks your honour said?"

"I did not mention any sum," said the chamberlain; "but you may have twenty, if you relieve us of this fear in the manner you have yourself mentioned."

"Ten in hand, I fancy," said the Gael—"word for word, your honour. If I trust you ten merks, you may trust me te trifle o' killin an auld wife—a mere pagatelle. I hae kilt twenty shust to please te Wolf o' Padenoch's son, Duncan."

"But do you know the woman?" said the chamberlain.

"I think I do," answered Allan. "There pe nae fear o' a mistake; put, if I should kill ae auld wife for anither, whar's te harm? The right ane can easily be kilt afterwards."

The importance of being entirely relieved from the danger that thus impended over the heads of the conspirators was very apparent to Sir Robert Stuart. He knew well

the character of James: a hint was often sufficient for him; and the statement of a woman, if it quadrated with known facts and suspicions, would be believed; inquiry would follow; one fact would lead to another, and the whole scheme be laid open. He therefore eagerly closed with Allan's offer; the ten merks were paid; and it was agreed upon that the murderer should receive his other ten merks, as well as harbourage and protection, upon satisfying the chamberlain that the deed was executed. Well pleased at having made so easily a sum of considerable magnitude in those days, Allan went to look for his mother—not, it may readily be conceived, for the purpose of killing her, but simply with the view of getting her out of the way, until the king had set off for Perth, which he understood he would do in a few days.

He wandered round the skirts of the town, musing on his good fortune, looking at the novelties that presented themselves to his view, and keeping a sharp eye for a red cloak. In this way he passed the time until the grey of the twilight; when, as he sauntered along the foot of the Calton Hill, he saw, lying in a sequestered spot, his aged parent, wrapped up in her red cloak, and apparently in a sound sleep, into which she had, in all likelihood, fallen, from the excessive fatigue to which she had been exposed in her long journey to the metropolis. The affection of the son produced only an involuntary sigh, and a musing attitude of a few moments. He hastened to the residence of the chamberlain; and, as he passed the door of a flesher who was killing sheep, ran in, and, without saying a word, dipped his sword in the blood, and then proceeded on his way. He got instant admittance to his employer, who was sitting alone, occupied by the thoughts of the mighty and dangerous enterprise on which he had entered. Slipping up to him, with an air of great secresy, he stood before him.

"She's dead!" said Allan, looking into the face of Stuart, with an expression of countenance in which triumph and cunning were strangely blended.

"You are a most expeditious workman," replied the chamberlain; "but where is the evidence of our being freed from this plague?"

"Will her heart's pluid satisfy ye?" replied Allan, holding up the sword covered with the sheep's blood. "Waur evidence has hanged a shentleman before noo. Ye'll pe ken there's twa kinds o' pluid in te human body—a red and a plack: te ane comes frae flesh wounds o' te skean dhu, when it's bashfu, and winna gang far ben; and te other follows te plow o' te determined dirk, when it seeks te habitation o' life in te heart itsel. Does yer honour ken te difference? What say ye to that?" showing him the sword. "I'm sure ye never saw ponnier plack pluid i' te heart o' a courtier o' King Shames."

"You are getting ironical in your probation," said the chamberlain. "I'm no judge of the difference of veinous and arterial blood; but, if I were, how am I to be satisfied that this is the life stream of the old woman?"

"Nae other auld plack teevel could hae kept it sae lang in her gizzard," replied the Gael. "Put there pe mair evidence. An honest man's like gowd—he rejoices in te fiery furnace. I'll show ye te pody o' te treacherous hag hersel, wha would hae sent us a' to te head o' her clan, Satan, if I hadna peen beforehand wi' her. She lies on te Calton yonder, as quietly as if she were in the Greyfriars; and if your honour will accompany me, ye may satisfy yersel o' te absolute truth and verity o' my statement."

"The dead body cannot be long there," answered Sir Robert, "without being discovered; and by approaching the spot we may subject ourselves to suspicion, especially if you were previously seen hounding about the place."

"Ugh! ugh! Is that a' your honour kens o' a Gael's

prudence?" replied Allan. "Think ye I wanted to let your Edinburghers see how neatly we Gaels can strike pelow te fifth rib? Na! I was working for te ten merks, and te salvation o' mysel, your honour, and Sir Robert Graham; and if te auld witch hersel wasna inclined to spake o' te affair, it didna pecome me to say a single word. She took it as quietly and decently as I'll receive te ten merks (and whatever mair my expedition merits) frae te hands o' yer honour. Put te night's fa'in, and there's nae danger in lookin at te pody o' a dead wife. Come, your honour, and trust to me for your guide."

The chamberlain, pleased with the issue of his negotiation, was notwithstanding fully aware of the danger to which he was exposed by his connection with the murderer. He hesitated about examining the evidence of the murder; but how otherwise could he have any faith in the statement of the Highlander? And his peace of mind, as well as the safety of his colleagues, would repay the slight risk he ran in taking a cursory view of the body of the murdered woman. He resolved, therefore, on accompanying Allan to the spot; and having requested the Gael to go before, he secretly followed him, until he saw his guide stop, and point with his finger to the spot where his mother lay. Still under an alarm, which the increasing gloom might have in some measure allayed, he walked irresolutely forward, and having seen the body of the woman wrapped up in the red cloak lying extended on the ground, he had not the slightest doubt that she was dead, having been killed by the stern Gael. He instantly retreated; and having waited for the approach of Allan, paid him twenty merks (being ten in addition), and requested him to fly with all expedition to the Highlands. Allan received the money, counting it with a nonchalance which surprised the chamberlain, and bidding him good-night, walked away to waken his mother, and take her to a warm bed, while the other went

home, delighted that this great danger had been so easily averted.

Some days afterwards, the king and queen set out for Perth—Sir Robert Stuart, now freed from all alarm, having preceded them, for the purpose of making the necessary preparations at Dundee for the reception of his royal master and mistress, and for their journey along the north bank of the Tay to Perth. The royal party arrived at Leith about twelve o'clock of the day, for the purpose of embarking in a yacht, which was to carry them across the Forth. A large assemblage of people was present, collected from Edinburgh and Leith, to see the embarkation; among whom, the courtiers, dressed in their gay robes, were conspicuous, as well from their dresses as the air of authority they assumed, on an occasion which some of them might suspect was to be the last in which their monarch would ever require their attendance. The sounds of the carriages and horses, of a tumultuous crowd, and of those actually engaged in the embarkation—with the crushing of anxious spectators, and the efforts of the military to insure order, and make room for the progress of the party towards the yacht—produced the confusion generally attending such a scene. The queen had been escorted forward to the side of the vessel, and been assisted on board; and the king was on the eve of taking the step which was to remove him from the pier into the yacht, when an old woman, wrapped in a red cloak, rushed forward, and, holding up two spare, wrinkled arms in the face of the monarch, cried, in a wild and prophetic manner—

"James Stuart, receive this warning! It is not made in vain, however it may be received. If you cross the Scottish sea, betwixt and the feast o' Christmas, you will never come back again in life."

Having said these words, she waved her hands, and disappeared. Struck with her solemn and impressive manner,

and her extraordinary appearance, James started, and stood for a moment mute. Recollecting himself, he called out to a knight to follow, and question her. He obeyed; but ere he could make his way among the crowd, Allan Mackay had seized his mother (for such she was), and hurried her beyond the reach of the courtiers. The event struck James forcibly. He concealed it from his queen; but, during the passage to Kirkcaldy, he was remarked to be silent and abstracted—a mood which remained on him during a great part of his journey. At Dundee, he repaired to the palace, in St Margaret's Close, where he still meditated secretly on the strange warning, and compared it with the denunciation and threat contained in the letter he had some time before received from Sir Robert Graham. After retiring to his chamber, he sent for Sir Robert Stuart, to commune with him on matters of importance. The message alarmed the guilty chamberlain, who conceived that the conspiracy of the north had been discovered, in spite of his murderous effort to conceal it, by the death of the Highland woman. He repaired to the presence-chamber, trembling, and full of fearful anticipations.

"Sir Robert," said the king, as the chamberlain approached him, "I am filled with gloomy apprehensions of a violent death, that will prevent me from re-crossing the Forth. Have you heard anything of late of my bitter foe, Graham, who has denounced me? Are you certain he is not hatching against me some bloody conspiracy in these fastnesses of the north?"

The question went to the heart of the conspirator. He gave up all for lost, and guilt supplied all that was awanting in the king's speech to fix upon him the reproach of plotting against the life of his sovereign. Happily, James did not observe his agitation, having relapsed, after his question, into the gloomy despondency in which he had for several days been immerged All the resolution of the

guilty man was required to enable him to utter a solitary question.

"What reason has your majesty," he said, "for entertaining these fears, apparently so unfounded?"

"I have been warned," replied the king, in a deep voice, "surely by a messenger from Heaven. As I stood on the pier of Leith, ready to step into the yacht, a strange woman, muffled up in a red cloak, approached me, and holding out her hands, warned me against crossing the Forth, and said that if I did, I would never come back alive. Her manner was supernatural, her voice hollow and grave-like. She disappeared, and, notwithstanding the efforts of my messengers to seize her, could nowhere be found. I cannot shake this vision from my mind. Every one knows that I despise superstitious fears; but that very circumstance makes my gloom and despondency the more remarkable."

This speech struck another chord in the mind of the guilty courtier. No doubt had remained in his mind that the old woman in the red cloak, mentioned by Sir Robert Graham, had been by his orders killed; he had seen her blood on the fatal sword, and he had seen her body lying lifeless on the ground. Who, then, was this second old woman in the red cloak, that had made such a fearful impression upon the king? Had Heaven not taken up arms against him, and re-incorporated the departed spirit of the murdered woman, for the purpose of her humane object being still attained? Had not the king himself, the most dauntless of men, said the figure was supernatural? And, above all, was it not certain that there was a just occasion for the interposition of Providence, when one of the rulers of the earth, who have often been protected by Heaven, was about to fall a victim to a cruel purpose, in which he himself was engaged? These thoughts passed through his mind with the rapidity of light, and struck his heart with a remorse and fear which made him quake. James looked

at him with surprise; but attributed his agitation to the strange tidings he had communicated regarding the supposed supernatural visitation. Relieved, however, from the fear of personal danger produced by the king's first announcement, the guilty chamberlain endeavoured to shake off his superstitious feelings, and, summoning all his powers, contrived to put together a few sentences of vulgar scepticism, recommending to the king not to allow the ravings of a maniac (as the old woman undoubtedly was) to disturb his tranquillity, or interfere with his sound and philosophical notions of the government of the universe.

The king proceeded to Perth, and subsequently overcame the feeling of apprehension and despondency produced by the supposed apparition; and the chamberlain got again so completely entoiled in the details of his conspiracy, that the affair passed from his mind also. By the time the festivities of Christmas came to be celebrated, the apprehensions of evil had died away, just in proportion as the real danger became every day more to be dreaded. The power of the chamberlain was now exercised vigorously, and with ill-merited success. He contrived to gain over to his side many of the royal guards; while Sir Robert Graham was not less successful in his organisation of the external forces, composed of wild and daring caterans, ready, on being let into the palace, to spread death and desolation wherever they came. Meanwhile, the Duke of Athol dreamed his day-dream of royalty, and indulged in all the intoxicating visions of state and power, which he thought were on the point of being realised. Yet the conspiracy was confined to a very few influential individuals—the duke himself, Graham, Stuart, Hall, and Chambers being almost the only persons of any distinction or authority who had been asked to join the bold enterprise; and these, it is supposed, would not have ventured on the scheme, had they not been blindfolded by personal cravings of insatiable ro-

venge, which prevented all prudential calculations of consequences.

As the revels approached, the chamberlain took care to prevail upon the king to send an invitation to those of the conspirators who were considered to be so much in favour at court as to be entitled to that mark of the royal favour; while especial care was also taken to get the invitations to the *real* friends of the king so distributed, that there should, on the night intended for the murder, be collected in the monastery as few as possible of the latter, and as many of the former as the king could be prevailed upon to invite. There would thus be insidious enemies within, at the head of whom would be the Duke of Athol; and fierce foes without, led by the furious and bloodthirsty Graham, to the latter of whom, by the bribing of the guards, a free passage would be opened to the sleeping apartment of the king, where the bloody scene was intended to be enacted in presence of the queen.

It was on the night of the 20th of February that the conspirators had resolved to execute their work of death. All things were carefully prepared: wooden boards were placed across the moat which surrounded the monastery, to enable the conspirators to pass unknown to the warders, who were placed only at the entrances; and the extraordinary precaution was taken by the chamberlain, to destroy the locks of the royal bedchamber, and of those of the outer room with which it communicated, whereby it would be impossible for those within to secure the doors, and to prevent the entrance of the party. Meanwhile, in the inside of the monastery, a gay party was collected, consisting of young and gallant nobles and knights, and crowds of fair damsels, dressed in the glowing colours so much beloved by the belles of that age. In the midst of this happy group were the traitors Sir Robert Stuart and his aged grandfather, Athol who looked and smiled upon the scene, while they

knew that, in a few minutes, that presence-chamber would in all likelihood be flowing with the blood of the king who sat beside them, and become, through their means, a scene of massacre and carnage.

Of all the individuals in the royal presence-chamber on that night, no one was more joyous than the merry monarch himself. A poet of exquisite humour, as well exemplified in his performance of "Peebles to the Play," he was the life and spirit of the amusements of the evening, which consisted chiefly of the recitation of poetical stories, the reading of romances, the playing on the harp to the plaintive tunes of the old Scottish ballads (the touching words being the suitable accompaniment), the game of tables, and all the other diversions of the age. In all this, the king joined with (it is said) greater pleasure and alacrity than he had exhibited for many years. In the midst of his jests and merry sayings, he even laughed and made light of a prophecy which had foretold his death in that year—an allusion perfectly understood by those who knew of the apparition of the old woman in the red cloak, whose warning, though not forgotten, was now treated with his accustomed levity. In playing at chess with a young knight, over whose shoulder the grey-bearded Athol looked smilingly into the face of the king, his jesting and merriment were kept up and exercised in a manner that suggested the most extraordinary coincidences. He had been accustomed to call the young knight "the king of love;" and, in allusion to the warning, advised him to look well to his safety, as they were the only two kings in the land. The old duke started as he heard this statement come from the mouth of one on the very eve of being consigned to the dagger; and for a moment thought that the conspiracy had been discovered; but a second look at the joyous merry-maker left no doubt on his mind that his jesting was the mere overflow of an exuberance of spirits.

At this moment a hundred wild and kilted caterans, armed with swords and knives, and thirsting for blood, were lurking in the dark angles of the court of the monastery, directing their eyes to the blazing windows of the presence-chamber, and listening to the sounds of the revels. The conspirators within knew, by a concerted signal, that Graham and his party were in this situation, and looked anxiously for the breaking up of the entertainment; but the king was inclined to prolong the amusements, and the hour was getting near midnight. While the king was engaged in play with the young knight, Christopher Chambers, one of the conspirators, was seized with a fit of remorse, and repeatedly approached the royal presence, with a view to inform James of his danger; but the crowd of knights and ladies who filled the presence-chamber prevented him from executing his purpose. The amusements continued; it was now long past midnight, and Stuart and Athol heard at length the long-wished-for declaration of the king, that the revels should be concluded.

Just as James had uttered this wish, the usher of the presence-chamber approached Stuart, and whispered in his ear that an old woman, wrapped up in a red cloak, was at the door, and requested permission to see and speak with the king. The guilty chamberlain, who was on the point of giving the fatal signal, heard the statement with horror, and recoiled back from the usher; but the die was cast, and even the powers of heaven were disregarded amidst the turmoil of wild thoughts that were then careering through his excited mind. "Bid her begone—thrust her from the door!" he whispered in the ear of the usher, and applied himself again to the dreadful work in which he was engaged.

Soon after this, the king called for the parting cup, and the company dispersed—Athol and Stuart being the last to leave the apartment. With the view of going to bed, James and his queen now retired to the sleeping chamber,

where the merry monarch, still under the influence of high spirits, stood before the fire in his night-gown, talking gaily with those around him. At that moment, a clang of arms was heard, and a blaze of torches was seen in the court of the monastery. The quick mind of the king saw his danger in an instant; a suspicion of treason, and a dread of his bloodthirsty enemy, Graham, were his first thoughts. Alarm was now the prevailing power; and the ladies of the bedchamber, rushing into the sleeping room, cried that treason was abroad. The queen and her attendants flew to secure the doors; the locks were useless; and the certainty of having been betrayed by his chamberlain now occupied the mind of the king. Yet, though he saw his destruction resolved on, he did not lose presence of mind. He called to his queen and ladies to obstruct all entrance as long as they could, and rushed to the windows. They were firmly secured by iron bars, and all escape in that way was impossible. The clang of arms increased; and the sounds of the approach of armed men along the passages came every instant nearer and nearer. The ladies screamed, and held the doors; the king was in despair; and, seizing a pair of tongs from the fireplace, with unexampled force wrenched up the boards of the floor, and descended into a vault below, while the ladies replaced the covering.

A slight hope was now entertained that he might escape. The vault communicated with the outer court; but, unfortunately, the passage had been, shortly before, by the king's own orders, built up, to prevent the tennis-balls of the players in the tennis-court, to which the passage led, from rolling into the vault (as they had often done), and being lost. There was, therefore, no escape. Meanwhile, Graham and his caterans rushed towards the bedchamber, and having slain Walter Straiton, a page they met in the passage, began to force open the door, amidst the shrieks of the women, who still, though weakly, attempted to bar-

ricade it. An extraordinary circumstance here occurred: Catherine Douglas, with the heroic resolution of her family, thrust her arm into the staple from which the bolt had been taken by the traitors, and in an instant it was snapped asunder. The conspirators, yelling like fiends, and with bloody daggers and knives in their hands, now rushed into the room, and cowardly stabbed some of the defenceless ladies, as they fled screaming round the apartment, or trying vainly to hide themselves in its corners and beneath the bed. The queen herself never moved: horror had thrown its cataleptic power over her frame; she stood rooted to the floor, a striking spectacle—her hair hanging over her shoulders, and nothing on her but her kirtle and mantle. In this situation, she was stabbed by one of the conspirators, and was only saved from the knives of others and death itself, by a son of Graham, who, impatient for the life of the king, commanded the men to leave such work for that which was more important. The king was not to be found; and a suspicion gained ground that he had escaped from the sleeping room by the door. A search was therefore made throughout the whole monastery, in all the outer rooms along the corridor, and in the court; and had it not been that Stuart assured them that it was impossible the king could have escaped beyond the walls, the search would have been relinquished in despair.

Meanwhile, the citizens and the nobles who were quartered in the town heard the tumult, and were hastening to the spot. The king might yet be saved; for his place of escape had not been discovered, and rescue was at hand. Alas! his own impatience brought on his head the ruin that seemed to be averted. Hearing all quiet, he fancied that the traitors had relinquished the search, and called up from the vault to the ladies, to bring the sheets from the bed and draw him up again into the apartment. In attempting this, one of the ladies, Elizabeth Douglas, fell down

into the vault. The noise recalled the murderers. Thomas Chambers, who knew all the holes and recesses of the monastery, suddenly remembered the small vault, and concluded that James must be concealed there. He therefore returned; the torn floor caught his eye; the planks were again lifted, and a blazing torch was soon held down into the dark hole. The king and the unfortunate lady, who lay apparently breathless beside him, were seen; and, glorying in his discovery, the relentless ruffian shouted aloud with savage merriment, and called his companions back; "for," as he said, "the bride was found for whom they had sought and carolled all night." A dreadful scene was now enacted in the vault, in the hearing of the queen, who, with her attendants, was still in the apartment. Sir John Hall first leaped down; but James, strong in his agony, throttled him, and flung him beneath his feet. Hall's brother next descended, and met the same fate; and now came the arch-enemy, Sir Robert Graham. Like a roaring tiger, he threw himself into the hole, and James, bleeding sore from the wounds of the Halls' knives, was overcome, and fell, with the stern murderer over him. The wretched monarch implored mercy, and begged his life, should it be at the price of half his kingdom.

"Thou cruel tyrant!" said Graham, "never hadst thou compassion on thine own noble kindred; therefore expect none from me."

"At least," cried James, "let me have a confessor, for the good of my soul."

"None," replied Graham, "but this sword!" Upon which he stabbed him in a vital part; but the king continued to implore so piteously for mercy, that even Graham's nerves were shaken, and he felt inclined to fly from the dreadful scene.

His companions above noticed this change; and, as he was scrambling up, leaving the king still breathing, they

threatened him with death, if he did not complete the work. He at last obeyed, and struck the king many times, till he died.

The story of the Highland woman who appeared to King James, which to historians has so long been a subject of mystery, is thus, by our chronicle, cleared up. We may afterwards do the same good office to other curious and doubtful parts of Scottish history; but, in the meantime, as it may be satisfactory to know the fate of those bold conspirators who executed so desperate a purpose as that we have narrated, we may mention that the queen never rested till she had brought them all to justice. Never was retribution so certain, so ample, so merited, and so satisfactory to a whole nation; for James's alleged harshness was confined to the nobles, and never extended to the people, who loved the royal poet, and revered their king. Sir Robert Stuart and Thomas Chambers were first taken; and, upon a confession of their guilt, were beheaded on a high scaffold raised in the market-place, and their heads fixed on the gates of Perth. Athol next suffered; and, as he had sighed for a crown, his head, when it was severed from his body, was encompassed by an iron one. Graham was next seized; and, after the manner of the times, was tortured before his execution in a manner which we cannot describe. Hall and all the others suffered a similar fate; and it was alleged that not a single individual who had a hand in the terrible tragedy was allowed to escape—thus justifying the ways of God, where vengeance, though sometimes concealed, sooner or later overtakes those who contravene His laws.

THE CURATE OF GOVAN.

Do any of our east or south country readers know anything of the little village of Govan, within about two miles or so of Glasgow? If they do, they will acknowledge, we daresay, that it is one of the most prettily-situated little hamlets that may be seen. We mean, however, solely that portion of it which stands on the banks of the Clyde. On a summer evening, when the tide is at its height, filling up the channel of the river from side to side in a bumper, and is gliding stilly and gently along between its margins of green, there cannot, we think, be anything prettier than the scene of which the little picturesque village of Govan forms the centre or principal object. The antique row of houses stretching down to the water, widened, at this particular spot, into a little lake, by the confluence of the Kelvin; the rude but picturesque salmon fisher's hut in the foreground; the river winding far to the west, and skirting the base of the beautiful hills of Kilpatrick, that form the boundary of the scene in that direction—all combine to form, as we have already said, a scene of more than ordinary beauty.

Such, as nearly as we can describe it, is the local situation and appearance of Govan at the present day; for often, often have we been there in our younger years, and never shall we forget the happy hours we have spent in it. Pleasant, indeed, was the walk of a summer's evening on the banks of the Clyde—pleasant was the feast of kippered salmon, for which the village was celebrated; but pleasanter than all were the looks—the kindly, *pawky* looks—the civility and the homely but shrewd wit of David Dreghorn,

the honest, worthy, and kindhearted landlord of the ——. We are not sure if his house had a name; but it was not necessary; for well and widely was David known, and by none was he known by whom he was not esteemed and respected.

But there were other landlords in Govan before David's day—not more worthy or better men, but of older date—yes, as far back as the time of James V. At that period, the principal, indeed the only, hostelry in Govan was kept by one Ninian, or, as he was more commonly called, Ringan Scouler. The house — a small, plain-looking building, with marvellously few windows, and these few marvellously small in size and wide apart—was situated at the extreme end of the village, which terminates at or near the margin of the river. All trace of it has long since disappeared; but we have pointed out its precise locality. It commanded, as those who know the spot will at once believe, a delightful view, or rather series of views. The front windows looked up the Clyde, the back windows down; and those in the gable commanded the Kelvin and the woodland scenery (more so then than now) around and beyond. The sign of his calling, which hung above the door of Ringan Scouler's little hostelry, was then, as it still is, that of several of his brethren in trade in the village—the figure of a salmon, painted in its natural colours on a black ground. Ringan's emblematic fish, however, was not a very shapely animal; but there was enough of likeness remaining to place beyond all manner of doubt that it was meant to represent the "monarch of the flood." Mine host himself was a quiet-mannered, good-humoured, and good-natured person, with just such an eye to the one thing needful as admitted of his cherishing this temperament, and of keeping a comfortable house over his head. Perhaps his propensity of the kind just alluded to went even a little further in its objects than this. We will not

say that, with all his quiet wit, and good-humour, and kindness, and apparent carelessness about the main chance, he was not a pretty vigilant marker of it. But what then? It was all in a fair and honest way; and he gave his urbanity of manner as an equivalent.

Ringan, at the period of our story, was about fifty years of age, of a fresh, healthy complexion, and shrewd cast of countenance; the latter being lighted up by a couple of little, cunning, grey eyes, deep set beneath a pair of shaggy eyebrows, which, again, were surmounted by a head of hair, prematurely grey—a constitutional characteristic; for neither his years nor his cares warranted this usual indication of the pressure of one or other, or both of these causes. Ringan was, moreover, well to pass in the world; for, being a man of at least ordinary prudence, and having an excellent business, his circumstances throve apace. His business, we have said, was excellent. It could not be otherwise; for it was not in the nature of man to pass Ringan's door without entering it. His good things, in the shape of liquor and provender; his quaint, sly jokes, spoken almost under breath, which, in his case, added to their effect; his cunning, smirking, facetious look and manner—were all and each of them wholly irresistible; and all the king's lieges who passed within a mile of his door, and who had a penny in their pockets, felt them to be so.

Such was Ringan Scouler, the landlord of the Grilse and Gridiron—for we forgot to say, in its proper place, that the culinary implement just named appropriately figured at one end of the board. The list of Ringan's regular customers, which was a very extensive one, included the curate and schoolmaster of Govan, both drouthy cronies and sworn friends, although there was not a night in the world that they did not quarrel; but this was more the effect of Ringan's ale than of any inherent pugnacity of disposition in the belligerents themselves. This quarrel, however, was so

usual and so regular, that Ringan could tell to a measure of liquor when it would commence.

In summer, these worthies generally occupied a little room that overlooked the river; but in winter, or when the weather began to get chill, they took possession of a corner of the kitchen, the most cheerful apartment in the house at that season, as it was always kept in most admirable order. The walls were white as snow, the floor strewed with bright white sand; immense rows of shining pewter plates and jugs of the same metal glittered on the rack; and a rousing fire crackled in the old-fashioned chimney. Nothing, in short, could be more tempting to the wayfarer, on a dark, cold, and drizzly night, than a casual peep through the blazing windows into Ringan's cheerful kitchen; and nothing could in reality be more comfortable than that kitchen, when you were once into it. In a corner of this snug apartment was to be found regularly, every evening, say, from October to May, between the hours of seven and ten, Mr Walter Gibson, curate of Govan, and Mr John Craig, schoolmaster there. Before them, and near to the fireplace, stood a small fir table, and on this table invariably stood a large pewter measure of ale, and three horn tumblers with silver rims—one for each of the persons just named, and a spare one for the use of the landlord, who joined their potations as often as the demands on his attention to the duties of the house permitted.

Out of all the evenings, however, which the curate and schoolmaster spent in Ringan Scouler's, we can afford to select one only; but this shall be one on which something occurred to diversify the monotony of their meetings, otherwise distinguished only by the usual quarrel, the usual humdrum conversation (which, though sufficiently interesting to themselves, would, if recorded, afford very little entertainment to the reader), and the usual consumption of somewhere about a gallon of mine host's double ale. The

particular evening to which we have alluded shall be one in the latter end of the month of October, and the year somewhere about *anno* 1529. It was a raw, wet, and cold night—circumstances which greatly enhanced the comforts of Ringan's kitchen, as both the curate and schoolmaster very sensibly felt. Having each turned off a couple of horns of their good host's home-brewed, the conversation between the two worthies began to assume a lively, desultory character.

"I was up in the toun the day, curate," said the schoolmaster—a thin, hard-visaged personage, with a good deal of the failing said to be inherent in his craft—conceit. "I was up in the toun," he said—meaning Glasgow.

"Were ye?" quoth the curate—in personal appearance and manner the very antipodes of his friend; being a stout, homely-looking man, of blunt speech and great good-nature; his age, about forty-five. "And what saw ye strange there, Mr Craig?"

"Naething very particular, but the braw new gatehouse o' the archbishop. My certy, yon's a notable piece o' wark! His arms are engraven on the front o't—three cushions within the double tressure. Man, curate, can ye no contrive to warsle up the brae a bit? I'm sure waur than you's been made a bishop."

"I'm no sae ambitious, Johnny," replied the curate. "If I were rector o' Govan, I wad be content. But St Mungo himsel wadna get even that length noo-a-days without a pouchfu o' interest—and I hae nane."

"The mair's the pity," said the schoolmaster, filling up his horn tumbler; "but there's nae sayin what may happen yet."

"Indeed, is there no, Mr Craig," interposed Ringan, who made at this particular moment one of the party. "Ye may get promotion, curate, whan ye least expeck it, and may find a freend whar ye didna look for him. There's mony chances, baith o' guid and ill, befa' folk in this warld."

While the curate's friends were endeavouring, by these vague and sufficiently commonplace but well-meant remarks, to inspire him with hopes of better days, it was announced to the party that the ferry-boat was bringing over a passenger. By the way, with regard to this particular, we forgot to say before that there *was* a ferry across the Clyde, just below Ringan's house; and, as the passengers were not then, as they are now, very numerous, there was always a degree of interest and speculation excited by their appearance.

"Wha can he be?" said Ringan. "Some o' oor ain folk, I fancy. It'll be Jamie Dinwoodie frae Glasgow fair, I'll wad a groat. He's come roun by Partick, instead o' comin doun by the water-side."

"The deil o' him it's, at ony rate, Ringan," said the schoolmaster. "Jamie's been hame twa hoors since, and as fou's a fiddler."

All further speculation on the subject of the passenger was here interrupted by the entrance of that person himself; and it was with some disappointment the speculators found that, to judge by his appearance, he was not worth speculating about; for he was very meanly dressed—nay, worse than meanly—his attire was beggarly; so much so, indeed, that there was a general belief that he was a mendicant by profession, although, perhaps, of a somewhat better order than common. His apparel consisted of a threadbare and patched short coat or surtout, of coarse grey cloth, secured round his middle by a black belt. On his legs he wore a pair of thick blue rig-and-fur hose or stockings, as a certain description of these *wearables* are called in Scotland. They are now nearly extinct, but may still be seen occasionally. Those on the legs of the stranger were darned in fifty places, and with worsted of various colours. His shoes were in no better condition than his stockings, being patched in nearly as many places. On

his head he wore an old broad blue bonnet, which, with a pair of sadly dilapidated inexpressibles, and a rough newly-cut staff, completed his equipment—the whole unequivocally bespeaking a very limited exchequer. On his entrance, the stranger, perceiving the respectable quality of the guests assembled in the kitchen of the Grilse and Gridiron, reverently doffed his bonnet, and apologised for intruding on the "honourable company."

"Nae apology necessary, freend," said the curate, rising from his seat, to allow the poor traveller, who was dripping with wet, to approach nearer to the fire. "Come awa—nae apology at a' necessary. This is a public hostelry; and, if ye can birl your bawbee, ye've as guid a richt to accommodation as the best in the land."

"Thanks to ye, honourable sir," replied the stranger, meekly. "I wish every ane were o' your way o' thinking; but I find this auld coat and thae clouted shoon nae great recommendations to civility onywhere."

Saying this, the stranger planted himself in a chair before the fire, and ordered the landlord to bring him a measure of ale.

"Tak a moothfu o' this in the meantime, honest man," said the curate, handing him his own goblet; "for ye seem to be baith wat and weary."

"Ou, no—no very weary, sir," replied the stranger, taking the proffered goblet; "but a wee thing wet, certainly. I hae only come frae Glasgow the day."

"Nae far'er?" said the curate.

"No an inch," replied the other.

"Tak it oot, man, tak it oot," said the former, as the latter was about to return the goblet, after merely tasting it. "It'll warm your heart, man, and I'm sure ye're welcome till't."

The stranger, without any remark, did as he was bid, and drained out the cup. In the business of this scene, the

schoolmaster took no part, but maintained a haughty distance; his pride evidently hurt by the intrusion into his society of a person of such questionable condition—a feeling which he indicated by observing a dignified silence. This difference of disposition between the two gentlemen did not escape the stranger, who might have been detected from time to time throwing expressive glances of inquiry, not unmingled with contempt, at the offended dominie. The displeasure of his friend, however, did not deter the kindhearted curate from prosecuting his conversation with the stranger, who eventually proved to be so intelligent and entertaining a person, that he gradually forced himself into the position of an understood, though not formally acknowledged, member of the party. Being full of anecdote and quaint humour, such as even the schoolmaster could not altogether resist, although he made several ineffectual attempts to do so, the laugh and the liquor both soon began to circulate with great cordiality; and in due time songs were added to the evening's enjoyment. In this species of entertainment the good-humoured curate set the example, at the earnest request of Ringan, who asked him, and not in vain, to "skirl up," as he called it, the following ditty, which he had often heard the worthy churchman sing before:—

"In scarlet hose the bishop he goes,
In the best o' braid claith goes the vicar;
But the curate, puir soul, has only the bowl
To comfort him wi' its drap liquor, drap liquor,
To comfort him wi' its drap liquor.

"Right substantial, in troth, is the fat prebend's broth,
And the bishop's a hantle yet thicker;
But muslin kail to the curate they deal,
Sae dinna begrudge his drap liquor, drap liquor,
Sae dinna begrudge his drap liquor.

Gie the sodger renown, the doctor a gown,
And the lover the long looked-for letter:

But for me the main chance is a weel-plenish'd manse—
And the sooner I get it the better, the better,
And the sooner I get it the better."

"Faith, and I say so too with all my heart, sir," said the stranger, laughing loudly, and ruffing applause of the good curate's humorous song on the table. "I'm sure I've known many a one planted in a comfortable living, who, I would take it upon me to say, were less deserving of it than you are."

"That may be, honest man," replied the curate; "but, as I said to my freend here a little ago, when he made the same remark, I hae nae interest; and withoot that, ye ken, it's as impossible to get on, as for a milestane to row its lane up a hill."

"Indeed, sir, that is but too true, I fear," said the stranger; "yet the king, they say, is very well disposed to reward merit when he finds it, and has often done so without the interference of influence."

"Ou, I daur say," replied the curate; "he's gude aneugh that way—na, very guid, I believe; but I hae nae access to the king, and it'll be lang aneugh before my merits, if I hae ony—which I mysel very much doot—'ll find their way to him. He has owre mony greedy gleds to feed, for the like o' me to hae ony chance o' promotion. No, no, freend—

"Curate o' Govan I was born to be,
An' curate o' Govan I'm destined to dee."

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed the stranger, laughing; "a bit of a poet, curate."

"In an unco sma' way, freend," replied the worthy churchman.

"Excuse my freedom, sir," rejoined the stranger; "but pray how long have you been curate of this parish?'

"Nine years, come Martinmas next."

"And no prospect of advancement yet?"

"Just as muckle as ye may see through a whunstane;

and ye ken it taks gey sharp een to see onything through that."

"Nae doot," replied the stranger; "but the king, though he cannot see through a whunstane farther than ither folk, has pretty sharp eyes, and ears, too, sir, and baith hears and sees things that every one is not aware of. You may, therefore—who knows?—be nearer promotion than you think. Isn't the rectorship of Govan vacant just now?"

"Deed is't, freend," said the curate; "and if I had it, I wadna ca' the king my cousin, though he were my uncle's son. But it'll no be lang vacant, I warrant; some o' thae hungry hingers-on aboot the court 'll be clinkin doun intill't in the turnin o' a divot. It's owre canny a seat to be lang withoot a sitter."

"It will not be long without an incumbent, I daresay," rejoined the stranger; "but I'm not sure that you're right, curate, as to the description of person that will obtain it. But will your friend here not favour us with a verse or two? It is his turn now."

"Ou, I daresay he will," replied the curate. "Come, Johnny, gie's yer auld favourite."

With this request, the schoolmaster, who was now considerably mollified by the liquor he had drank, readily complied, and struck up—

'Let kings their subjects keep in awe,
By terror o' the laws;
For me, I fin' there's naething like
A guid thick pair o' tawse.

'Let doctors think to store the mind,
By screeds o' rules and saws—
Commend me to the learning that's
Weel whupp'd in wi' the tawse.

"Let lawyers, whan they wad prevail
In fine words plead their cause—
The *argumentum* still wi' me
Is thae bit nine-taed tawse."

Suiting the action to the word, the dominie, on repeating the last line, whipped the formidable and efficacious instrument he spoke of out of his pocket. Whether, however, it had actually nine toes or not, or whether that assertion was merely a poetical flourish, none of those present took the trouble of ascertaining.

"By my troth, sir," said the stranger, when the schoolmaster had concluded, "it's a pity that such a thing as tawse was not in use outside the school as well as inside. There are many children of the larger growth in the world who would be greatly improved by its application.'

"Come, landlord," now said the curate, "it's your turn now;—and it'll be yours belyve, freend," he added, addressing the stranger. "Up wi't, Ringan—up wi't, man."

"Ye'se no want that lang," said the jolly, good-natured landlord of the Grilse and Gridiron, with one of his quiet, cunning shrugs of the shoulders and pawky leers of the eye; and off he went with—

"A flowing jug, a reaming jug,
'S a glorious sicht, my dear boys;
It waukens love, it lichtens care,
And drowns all sorts of fear, boys.

"Come, gentlemen, chorus.

"Fal de ral, &c.

"Your sober man's an arrant fool,
His spirits are all sunk, boys;
Give me your honest, jovial soul,
That night and day is drunk, boys.

"Chorus, gentlemen.

"Fal de ral, &c.

"You tell me that his outward man
Is shabby, spare, and thin, boys;
But you forget to reckon on
The comfort that's within, boys.

"Chorus.

"Fal de ral, &c.

"Then, whether I be here or there,
Or this or t'other side, boys,
May streams o' ale still round me flow,
As broad and deep's the Clyde, boys!

"Chorus, gentlemen.

"Fal de ral," &c.

At the moment the landlord of the Grilse and Gridiron had completed his temperance-society lyric, and ere the tribute of applause which was ready to be paid down on the nail to him for it by his auditors could be tendered him—the feelings of the whole party were directed into another channel, by the information that a boat-load of passengers had just landed at the ferry. On receiving this intelligence, Ringan hurriedly rose from the table, and ran to the door, to see what portion of the human cargo was likely to come his way—and right glad was he to find that he was about to be favoured with the company of the whole. They were one party, and were approaching Ringan's house in a string. On entering the kitchen, they were found to be three men and two women. The former were apparently farmers—two of them elderly men, and one of them a young, loutish-looking fellow, of about two-and-twenty. The women were mother and daughter—the latter a beautiful girl, of about eighteen or twenty years of age. The whole of these persons were well known to the curate, schoolmaster, and landlord; and the consequence was a general cry of recognition, and a tumultuous shaking of hands.

"How are ye, curate?" "How are ye, Clayslaps?" "Glad to see you, Mr Craig!" "As glad to see you, Jordanhill!"

"And hoo are *ye*, guidwife?" said the curate, advancing towards the elder of the two females, and taking her kindly by the hand—"and you, Meenie, my bonny dear," he said, turning towards the daughter—"hoo are ye? and hoo," he added, with an intelligent smirk, "is Davy Linn o' Partick?

But hoo's this?" he said, more seriously, and now peering into her face—"there's a tear in yer ee, Meenie. What's wrang, lassie? Hae ye lost yer leman? Has Davy no been sae kind's he should hae been?"

Poor Meenie made no reply to the worthy curate's half-jocular, half-serious remarks. Her heart was sad; and to her dismal and heart-withering was the errand on which she and her friends (for, of the men of the party, one was her father, the other her uncle, and the third her intended husband) had come to Govan. While the curate spoke to her, she held down her head to hide the tears that were fast falling from her beautiful dark hazel eyes; but she could not conceal the heaving of her bosom, from the sobs which she was endeavouring to suppress.

"She's a camstairy cutty," said her father, Adam Ritchie of Clayslaps, frowningly, "and most undutifu, no to submit to the wishes o' her parents wi' a better grace."

"Surely every bairn is bound to obey with cheerfulness those to whom they owe their being," said the curate; "but there are some cases, Clayslaps, where it wad be cruelty to impose restraint, and unreasonable to expect ungrudged compliance."

"Weel, weel, curate," replied Adam Ritchie, impatiently, "we'll speak o' thae things anither time. In the meantime, landlord," he said, turning to Ringan, "bring us in some brandy; for we're baith cauld and wat, and a thumblefu o' the Frenchman 'll do us nae harm."

This order was speedily complied with. A small pewter measure of the liquor desired, accompanied by a small silver drinking-cup or quaigh, was placed on the table; and the whole party, including the former occupants of the kitchen, soon began to get cheerful and somewhat talkative, with the exception of Meenie Ritchie. In all that had hitherto passed, he of the clouted shoes and darned hose had taken no part, but had kept his eye steadily fixed on Meenie,

with a look of deep interest and compassion. At length, as if urged on by the increasing energy of those feelings, he rose, went up to her, and clapping her kindly on the shoulder—

"I wish, my sweet lass," he said, "it were in my power to lighten that bit heartie o' yours; for it seems to me to be sore burdened wi' some grief or other; and I am wae to see't."

"And what business hae ye to interfere, freend?" said her father, angrily. "If the lassie's in grief, whilk she has but little reason to be, she has them aboot her here wha hae a deeper interest in her than ye can hae, and a hantle better richt to be her comforters."

"Sma' comfort she's like to get amang ye, be ye what ye like to her," replied the stranger, doughtily; "and, if it's onything I can richt her in, tak my word for't, honest man, I'll do it with but small regard to your displeasure."

"My troth, ye're no blate, sirrah, to tell me sae—her ain faither," said Clayslaps, reddening with anger; "but I advise ye, freend, neither to mak nor meddle wi' oor affairs, else ye may repent it. That lassie, sir, is my dochter; and there's her mother, and there's her uncle, and there's her husband to be; sae ye may see hoo very little your interference is needed here."

"Weel, weel," replied the stranger, now retiring to his seat, "if there's only fair play going, I'm content; but I like to see that everywhere and on all occasions."

"So, Clayslaps," said the curate, here interfering, "is't to be a match after a'—is't?"

"Indeed is't, curate," replied the former. "Meenie's come roun at last, and is convinced her parents wadna advise her against her interest. Sae we have just come here this nicht for the express purpose o' gettin a cast o' your office; and I consider it the luckiest thing in the world that we hae foregathered wi' ye sae cannily, curate."

"Indeed, ay, curate," here chimed in Meenie's mother with that ready volubility and a little of the incoherence of her particular class and character, "we're just gaur to close the business at ance, and be dune wi't. I'm sure, muckle trouble and thocht it has cost us, curate. Ye ken Davy o' Partick, that was rinnin after Meenie, and wha the fulish, thochtless thing had sic a wark wi', hasna a plack in his purse—neither maut nor meal, neither hoose nor ha'; and were we gaun to throw awa oor lassie, wi' fifty merks o' tocher in her pouch, forbye what she may get whan the guidman and me's raked i' the mools, on a landless, penniless chiel like that? Na, my certy—we kent better than that, curate; and we're just gaun to gie her to the young laird o' Goupinsfou there, wha can lay down plack for plack wi' her, and has a bien house to tak her to, forbye."

"But," here interrupted the curate, at the same time looking towards Meenie, "are ye quite sure, Mrs Ritchie, that ye hae brocht your dochter to see this matter in the same prudent licht that ye do? I maun say, I doot it. And besides, guidwife, what's a' the hurry in marryin the lassie—she's but young yet."

"That's a faut that's aye mendin, curate," replied Meenie's mother; "and we think the suner she's oot o' harm's way the better. He's but a reckless chiel that Davy, and there's nae sayin what he micht do. Maybe rin awa wi' her afore mornin; for he has heard an inklin o' oor intentions. Sae we just cam slippin awa in the dark, to get the business settled withoot his kennin."

During all this time, poor Meenie Ritchie sat the picture of misery and suffering. She had never, since she entered, once raised her head, but continued wrapped up in the silent wretchedness of despair; painfully and forcibly showing how little she partook in the anxiety of her parents to accomplish the impending union. Meenie was evidently, in short, a victim to parental authority; and this all present

felt and saw, and none with more compassion than the worthy curate who was to be the unwilling instrument of her doom.

"To be plain wi' ye, guidwife," said the kind-hearted churchman, when the former had gone through her somewhat unconnected, but sufficiently intelligible, story, "and you, Clayslaps, and the rest o' ye that's concerned in this business, I dinna like it, and I will not marry these persons but with the full and free consent of both."

"But ye may not refuse, curate," said Meenie's father, somewhat testily. "She has consented already, and will consent again."

"In that case, certainly, I may not refuse," said the curate, going up to the afflicted girl, and taking her kindly by the hand. "Meenie, my dear," he now said, addressing her, "are ye here for the purpose o' being united to Gourpinsfou, o' yer ain free will and accord?"

The poor girl made no reply.

The curate repeated his question, when her father sternly called on her to answer. Thus urged, she uttered a scarcely audible affirmative.

"Then, since it is so, Meenie," said the curate, dropping her hand, "I may not decline to effect the union. Do you desire, Clayslaps, that the ceremony should be immediately performed?"

"As sune's ye like, curate," replied the latter.

"And the suner the better," added Meenie's mother.

"Our worthy landlord here, then," said the curate, "will prepare an apartment for us, and we will retire thither and unite this young couple. In the meantime, freends," he added, addressing the schoolmaster and he of the darned hose, "we had better settle oor lawin."

The schoolmaster instantly drew from his pocket his share of the reckoning, while the stranger pulled out the foot of an old stocking, which had been ingeniously converted into

a purse, and was about undoing the bit of twine with which it was secured, when the curate placed his hand on his arm, to arrest his proceedings, saying—

"The ne'er a bodle, freend, ye'll pay. This'll be the schulemaister's and mine."

"The ne'er o' that it'll be, curate," replied the schoolmaster. "Every ane for himsel. Plack aboot's fair play. Let every herrin hing by its ain head. The deil a bodle I'll pay for onybody."

"Then I will," said the curate. "I'll pay for this honest man here; for it may be he canna sae weel spare't." And he laid down his own and the stranger's share of the reckoning.

"Many thanks to ye, curate," said the latter; "but there's no occasion for this kindness. I have, indeed, but little to spare; but that gives me no claim whatever on your generosity."

"Say nae mair aboot it, freend," replied the curate—"say nae mair aboot it, man. Ye'll maybe pay for me in a strait, some ither time. It's but a trifle, at ony rate—no worth speakin aboot; sae ye'll obleege me by giein me my ain way."

"Well, well, since you insist on it," said the stranger, again tying up the stocking-foot, "I winna press the matter. Many thanks to ye."

The important affair of the reckoning settled, a general movement was made amongst the party to adjourn to the apartment which had been prepared for the celebration of the marriage ceremony. Taking advantage of the momentary confusion created by this circumstance, the curate's new friend touched him on the elbow, led him aside, and whispered into his ear, "Delay the ceremony as long as you can. The poor girl, you see, is about to be sacrificed. Perhaps I can prevent it."

The curate nodded assent, although it was but the result

of an impulse of his kind nature; for he could not conceive how any one—particularly such a very humble personage as he who had spoken to him—should have the power to stay an event of the kind, and under the circumstances of that which was about to take place. Still, as the request was in accordance with his own feelings, and as he did not know what this very odd person might have it in his power to do in the matter, he resolved to do what he could to comply with it. Having made the communication to the curate just recorded, the stranger suddenly and hurriedly left the apartment. Whither, and the purpose for which he went, we shall ascertain by following him.

On leaving the house, he hastened down to the river side, and having called the ferryman out of his temporary habitation, a little hut erected on the bank, "Friend," he said, "do you know Davy Linn o' Partick?"

"Brawly that," replied the ferryman. "No a better or decenter chiel in the country side than Davy. A warm-hearted, honest fellow!"

"Glad to hear it," said the inquirer. "Well, then, since that is the case, you will have no objection to do him a service, I daresay?"

"It would be ill my part, if I had," replied the man; "for he has done me twa or three services that I wadna willingly forget."

"Then across the water with you, and up to Partick as fast as if the old one were after you, and tell Davy to come here directly—to come along with you—if he would not lose Meenie Ritchie for ever."

"Feth, that'll mak him rin, if onything will," said the man, who knew of Davy's attachment to Meenie

"And stay, sir," continued the stranger, without noticing the interruption; "take this"—producing a small gold ring—"and go, at the same time, to the bishop's castle, up the way, there, on the Kelvin, and request some one of the do-

mestics to put it into the hands of Sir John Elphingstone, who is residing there just now with the bishop. He will instantly come out to you; and, when he does, tell him that the person who sent it desires to see him here immediately, and requests that he may come along with you. And now, my friend," he continued, "that you may do all these errands with the greater good-will and despatch, here's a gold Jacobus for thee."

The man took the coin, though not without a look of surprise at the donor, whom he evidently thought a most unlikely person to deal in gold rings and Jacobuses. He, however, made no remark, but prepared to execute the mission with which he had been intrusted; and was just about to push off his boat, when his employer called out to him—

"I forgot to say, friend, that when you have brought over your passengers, you will desire them to wait in your hut here until you have acquainted me with their arrival. You will find me in Scouler's hostelry."

With this order the boatman promised compliance, and pushed off; when his employer returned to the inn, and, planting himself before the kitchen fire, anxiously awaited the return of his messenger.

The curate, in the meantime, was faithfully performing his part, in promoting delay, by the aid of story and anecdote, although he felt as if it were a hopeless case. While thus employed, the landlady, a lively, active, bustling body, happening to come into the room, he suddenly stopped in the middle of a story, and exclaimed, laughingly, "Mrs Scouler, hae ye been makin ony brandy parritch lately?"

"Tuts, Mr Gibson, will I never hear the end o' that?" replied the hostess of the Grilse and Gridiron, good-naturedly, and hurrying out of the apartment, to escape the further banter of the facetious churchman.

"What aboot the brandy parritch, curate?" exclaimed

the guidwife of Clayslaps, on the hostess leaving the room.

I'll tell you that (replied the curate). Ae morning, pretty early, last summer, there cam a serving man, mounted on horseback, to oor freend Ringan Scouler's door here, and said he belonged to Lord Minto; and that he had been sent forward by his master, who was on the road comin frae Arranthrough to Edinburgh, to order some breakfast to be prepared for him. But what, think ye, was the breakfast ordered for his lordship? Why, it was parritch—plain, simple parritch; for it seems he prefers it to a' ither kind of food for his morning meal. Weel, however much astonished Mrs Scouler was at this order, she readily undertook to prepare the dish desired, and the man departed. But he had no sooner gone, than it occurred to her, that parritch for a lord ought to be made somewhat differently from those intended for a plebeian stomach. But wherein was this difference to consist? There was no choice of materials, no variety of ingredients, no process of manufacture, but one, that she had ever seen or heard tell of. At length, after racking her brain for some time, to see if she could not strike out something new on the subject, it occurred to her that, if she would substitute brandy for water, the desired object would be accomplished, and a lordly dish produced. Acting on this bright idea, the guidwife immediately emptied a bottle of brandy into the parritch-pot, and proceeded with the remainder of the process in the usual way. By the time his lordship came up, the parritch was ready, and a dish of them placed before him. Little suspecting—although he thocht they looked a wee thing darker than they should do—that there was anything wrong, his lordship took a thumpin spoonfu to begin wi'; but he no sooner fan' the extraordinary taste they had, than he jumped from his seat, threw doon the spune, and sputtered the contents o' his mooth a' owre the table, thinkin he was poisoned. He

then ran to the door, and called oot violently for oor guid hostess here. In great alarm she ran hastily up the stair, and inquired what was the matter.

"The matter, woman!" exclaimed his lordship, in a towering passion. "What's this you hae gien me?" pointing to the parritch; "what infernal stuff is that?"

Mrs Scouler, surprised at his lordship's want of discernment, explained to him what she had dune; when he burst out a-laughing, told her that the taste of a peer and a ploughman were precisely the same, and requested her to make him just such a mess as she made for her ain family. This was accordingly dune; whan his lordship, payin sax prices for his hamely breakfast, set off in great good humour, telling Mrs Scouler, however, at parting, never to put brandy in his parritch again.

The curate, having concluded his episodical anecdote, proceeded with the story which he had interrupted to relate it; but was beginning to be secretly uneasy at the long delay which was taking place in the operations of his friend of the darned stockings. From this feeling, however, he was in some measure relieved by the latter's sending for him, after a short while, and begging of him to gain but other fifteen minutes, if he could, when he pledged himself that such an event would occur as would, in all probability, save Meenie Ritchie from the fate that threatened her.

"But what is the event ye allude to, freend, and what is't ye propose to do in this matter that 'll produce the effect ye speak o'?" said the curate, looking doubtingly at his new acquaintance.

"Patience a little, my good sir," replied the latter, smiling, "and ye shall know all. In the meantime, trust to my good faith, and you will find that I can do more, perhaps, than my appearance would promise.

"Be it even so, then," said the curate; "but observe I cannot possibly put the ceremony off beyond the time you

have mentioned; for a' but the puir lassie hersel are gettin restlessly impatient."

The curate now returned to his party, and again had recourse to his store of anecdote, which was an inexhaustible one, to protract the performance of the ceremony. In the meantime, the boatman, faithful to his trust, was diligently executing the missions confided to him. On entering the house of Davy Linn's father, he found Davy sitting disconsolately by the fire, his head resting on his hand, and his eyes fixed, in thoughtful gaze, on the burning embers. He was thinking of Meenie Ritchie—there could be no doubt of that; for poor Davy thought of little else. Formerly, these thoughts had been pleasant to Davy; but at this moment they were sad and heart-withering; for he had heard some rumours of her parents intending to marry her to another; and he now, therefore, considered her as for ever lost to him.

"What the mischief, Davy, man, are ye sittin gloomin and glunchin at there?" said the ferryman, whose name was Archy Dawson, slapping the person he addressed on the shoulder—"up, man, up!—I hae guid news for you—at least what I think's likely to turn oot sae."

Davy, who had hitherto been so engrossed by his own gloomy reflections, as either not to have heard or not heeded the entrance of Archy Dawson, now rose from his seat, and, confronting the former, asked, with a faint smile, what the news was.

"Is there naebody in the hoose but yersel, Davy?" inquired Archy, looking cautiously round the apartment.

"Nane at this moment," replied Davy; "but there'll be some of them here belyve, I daursay."

"Weel, before they come, Davy, I'll tell you what's brocht me here the nicht." And Archy proceeded to relate the particulars of his mission.

Davy made no reply for some time; but the clenching of his teeth showed that some fierce spirit had been roused within him by the intelligence. At length he said — "Ay, I see how it is; they have stolen a march on me. Oh, if I had known this but an hour since, they should have had more guests at the wedding than they counted on, although some of them might not have been very welcome."

"Maybe, maybe, Davy," said Archy; "but it's likely no owre late yet; sae come awa as fast's ye can, man, and let's see what this business 'll turn oot to, and I'll tell ye the rest o' my story as we gang alang."

Davy, although without knowing distinctly why or wherefore, now left the house with his friend Archy, when the latter, as promised, acquainted him with the other mission he had to execute—namely, the delivering the ring to Sir John Elphingstone, at the bishop's castle, whither Davy subsequently accompanied him.

On arriving at the lordly mansion of the prelate, Archy inquired of a servant if Sir John was there, and was told that he was.

"Then," said he, "be sae guid, freend, as tak up this bit trantalum o' a thing till him, and I'll wait whar I am till I hear frae him."

In a few minutes after Sir John appeared, and, accosting Archy, said, "Well, my friend, what commands have you brought along with this?" producing the ring.

"The person that gied me that, sir," said Archy, "desired me to tell you to come along wi' me."

"And, pray, where are you from, friend?"

"Ou, no far awa, sir," said Archy; "just frae Govan, owre the way there."

"Very well, I'll accompany you. But who's this you have with you?" inquired the knight, looking at Davy Linn, who stood close by.

"That lad's name, sir," said Archy, "is Davy Linn; he belangs to Partick, up there, sir. He's a fine lad, Davy—a fine, decent, canny lad, sir."

"I have no reason to doubt it," replied Sir John; "but what does he here with you?"

"Dear me, sir," said Archy—"he was sent for, too, by the same chield that sent you the ring. I was desired to bring ye baith."

"Oh, indeed," replied Sir John—"that's enough; let us proceed, then." And the three immediately set off for Govan. On their arrival on the opposite bank of the river, Archy, leaving them there, hastened up to Ringan Scouler's, and intimated to his employer that he had executed his mission, and that the persons he had sent for waited him in his hut. On receiving this information, the former hastened down to the ferry station; and, after a brief interview and hasty explanation with Sir John and Davy, of which we leave the sequel to show the import, returned with equal haste to the hostelry, and now pushed boldly into the apartment occupied by the marriage party. The time stipulated with the curate had expired; and the latter, finding he could no longer delay the discharge of the duty he was called upon to perform, had already commenced the service.

"Friend," said the intruder, with a degree of boldness and familiarity in his manner which he had not before assumed, and at the same time laying his hand on the arm of the curate, to arrest his attention, "pray, stop a moment, if you please, till I speak a word with the bride's father." Saying this, and now turning round to the person to whom he alluded, "May I ask, Clayslaps," he said, "if your objection to your daughter's having the man of her choice is his want of fortune?"

Clayslaps looked for a moment at the querist with an expression of extreme surprise, but at length said—

"I dinna see what richt, freend, ye hae to put such ques-

tions; nevertheless, I will answer't. It is; and a guid and sufficient ane it'll be allooed, I think."

"Is it your only one? Have you no other fault to lay to the young man's charge?"

"I hae nae faut to charge him wi'," replied Clayslaps, crustily and reluctantly. "The lad, for ought I ken to the contrary, is weel aneugh in ither respects. But he's nae match for my dochter."

"Your wife has said," continued the querist, "that your daughter's portion is fifty merks, which is to be met by a similar sum on the part of the young man whom you intend for her husband. Now, friend, if Davy could produce two merks for her one—that is, a hundred to her fifty—what would you say to having him still for a son-in-law?"

"Why," said the bride's father, "that wad certainly hae altered the case at ae time; but it's owre late noo."

"Not a bit—not a bit," replied the propounder of the question—"better late than never."

"But young Goupinsfou has lands as weel as siller," rejoined Clayslaps.

"True, I believe," said the other speaker; "but suppose Davy could produce you evidence of his being a laird, too—say—let me see"—and he paused a moment—"say he could show you that he was laird of a hundred acres of the best land within half-a-dozen miles of Partick, what would you say then, guidman, to having Davy for your daughter's husband?"

"What's the use o' talking this nonsense?" said the Laird of Clayslaps, impatiently; "everybody kens that Davy Linn's baith landless and penniless, and likely aye to be. Sae, freend, hae the guidness to retire—for your company's no wanted here—and let the ceremony proceed."

"Not so fast, laird, if you please," returned the person addressed; and then, turning to the bride's mother, "What

would you say, guidwife, to Davy for a son-in-law, if he had all the property I have mentioned?"

"Ou, indeed, man, it wad surely hae altered the case athegither—there's nae doot o' that. I wad hae had nae objection till him, had that been the case—neither wad her faither, I am sure. But, as the guidman has said, what's the use o' speaking o' thae things, now, at ony rate? Davy has naething, and Goupinsfou has plenty, and that maks a' the differ—but, my faith, an unco differ it is."

"No doubt; but, if we remove this differ, guidwife," rejoined the stranger, "perhaps we may yet prevent two fond hearts being separated; and, to end this matter at once," continued the speaker, but now in a serious tone, "*I* will pay down a hundred merks on Davy Linn's account, as a free gift to him, on the day after he has become the husband of your daughter, and *I* will put him in possession, as a free gift also, of a hundred acres of the best land within six miles of Partick, on the same day, and on the same conditions."

"*Ye'll* pay doon a hunner merks to Davy Linn, and *ye'll* gie him a hunner acres o' land!" exclaimed Clayslaps, in the utmost amazement, and looking at the threadbare coat, clouted shoes, and darned hose of the man of promises, with the most profound contempt and incredulity. "And whar the deil are *ye* to get them?"

"Never ye fear that, freend," replied the latter, laughing; "I'll find them, I warrant you."

"Let's see the siller," said Clayslaps, triumphantly.

"Why, you certainly have me there, Clayslaps. I have not the money on me, indeed; but I will find you instant security for it, and for the entire fulfilment of my promises. Landlord," continued the speaker, and now turning to Ringan, who was one of his astonished auditors, "please to say to Sir John Elphingstone, whom I presume you know is to be found in the next room, that it will be obliging if he will step this way a moment."

We will not stop to describe the amazement that was felt by all, and expressed on every countenance in the apartment, on the delivery of this extraordinary message. Sir John Elphingstone was well known to every one there as a gentleman of large possessions and highly honourable character; and how he came to be at the call of such a person as he who had sent for him, or how he came to be in the house at all at such a time, was matter of inexpressible surprise to every one present. The whole affair, in short, was one of impenetrable mystery and perplexity to all, including the worthy curate. We will not, however, wait to describe the feelings of the party on this occasion, but go straight on with our story. Neither will we do so, in any case—thinking it much better to leave such matters wholly to the reader's own imagination.

The summons that called Sir John into the presence of the marriage-folks was immediately obeyed. In an instant that gentleman entered the apartment, with a smile upon his face, all the party standing up and receiving him with the most marked reverence and respect.

"You'll excuse the liberty I have taken in sending for you, Sir John," said the person who had called him, on the former's entrance; "and I certainly would not have taken that liberty, had I not known how much pleasure it gives you when an opportunity is afforded you of doing a generous thing. Here, Sir John, is a young woman about to be sacrificed at the altar of Mammon. Now, I know that you would not permit this if you could help it. Neither will I; and, to prevent it, I have promised to the intended bride's father here, that I will give one hundred merks and one hundred acres of land to the husband of Meenie's choice, Davy Linn of Partick—a very deserving young man, I believe—on the day after she is married to him. Now, Sir John, will you become my security to Clayslaps for the fulfilment of this promise?"

"Most assuredly," said Sir John, smiling; "let me have pen, ink, and paper, and I will give him my written obligation to that effect."

The materials were brought, and the obligation drawn out; Clayslaps and all the others being too much confounded by what was passing to offer any interruption or make any remark. When the paper was written, it was handed to Meenie's father, who, almost unconsciously—for he did not seem to know very well what he was doing—read it over. On concluding the perusal,

"A' richt aneugh," he said—"a' richt aneugh. Od, this *is* a queer business. But it's a' owre late, guid sirs. We canna be aff wi' Goupinsfou at this stage o' the affair, and in this sort o' way. It wadna be fair nor honest, and wad look unco strange like. Besides, ye canna expeck that he would submit to't himsel."

This was certainly a reasonable enough supposition, but it happened to be an unfounded one; for Goupinsfou was not only an ass, but a most abominably mean and selfish one; and Sir John, aware of this, thought he knew a way to reconcile him to the loss of Meenie.

Going up to Goupinsfou, he took him aside, and whispered in his ear, "I say, laird, you've long had an eye, I know, to the bit holm on the Kelvin, below the Gorroch Mills."

"It's a bonny spot," interrupted Goupinsfou, cocking his ears.

"It is," replied Sir John. "Well, then, it shall be yours, if you give up all claim to the hand of Meenie Ritchie, and give me in writing an entire quittance on that score."

"Dune!" exclaimed Goupinsfou, instantly, wisely calculating that he could readily find another wife, but might not so readily get another offer of the piece of land he so much coveted. "Dune, Sir John!" he exclaimed, grasping that gentleman by the hand with the selfish eagerness that

belonged to his character; but, desirous of glossing over the meanness of the transaction, he placed his acquiescence on another footing than that of bribery, by adding, "I wadna like, I'm sure, to force the lassie to marry me against her will. I gie her up wi' a' my heart."

Having obtained the brute's consent to resign the hand of Meenie, Sir John turned to the party, and informed them that their worthy friend, the Laird of Goupinsfou, out of consideration for the feelings of Meenie Ritchie, which he feared were not favourable to him, resigned all claim to her hand, and left her at full liberty to marry whom she pleased.

"Weel, that's certainly sae far guid," said Clayslaps; "but still I'm no athegither reconciled to this business. It looks ——"

"Toots, guidman," here interposed his wife, "the thing's a' richt aneugh. Havena ye Sir John's haun o' vrit for the promise made by this—this"—and she looked at the person she meant, and would have said *gentleman*, but another glimpse of the patched shoes directed her to the words—"*honest man*, to gie Davie the land and siller spoken o'; and what mair wad ye hae? Davie's a discreet, decent, well-doin lad, everybody kens, that will mak, I'm sure, a guid husband to Meenie; sae, just let them e'en gang thegither."

She would scarcely have said so much for Davie an hour before; but she said it now, and it was all well enough.

"Weel, weel, guidwife," said Clayslaps, "since it is sae, we'll see aboot it. There can be nae harm, however, in delayin a day or twa, at ony rate, till we think owre't."

"No, no—no delay," exclaimed the meddling stranger; "delays are dangerous, guidman. Nothing like the present moment. Let us strike while the iron's hot. Landlord," he said, turning round to Ringan, "send Davie Linn here."

In a second after, Davie Linn rushed into the apartment, flew to Meenie, and caught her in his arms. "Mine yet!

mine yet, Mcenie!" he exclaimed, rapturously. It was all he could say; and, little as it was, it was more than she he addressed was able to express. During the whole night, indeed, she had not opened her lips, and seemed to have been scarcely conscious of what was passing around her. This was the effect of deep misery; and the result was now nearly the same from an excess of joy.

"No delay now, curate," said the intermeddler. "Set to work as fast as you can, and buckle these two together. No objection, I fancy?"

"Oh, none in the world," said the curate; "I'll fix them in a trice. But I say, freend," he added, laughing, "I'm thinkin what a fule I was to pay your reckonin the nicht—ane wha maks the merks flee like drift snaw on a windy day, and gies awa lumps o' land wi' as little thocht as—as—as I settled your lawin. Feth, but it was fulish aneugh o' me, and ye're a queer ane, be ye wha ye like."

"Not so very foolish, perhaps, as you think, curate," said the person thus addressed, "and that it's possible ye may find. At any rate, it's no lost what a friend gets, you know, curate; but, in the meantime, will you proceed with the ceremony, if you please. And, guidman," he added, turning to Clayslaps, "will ye allow me to give away the bride?"

"I ken nane here that has a better richt," replied the latter, now thoroughly reconciled to the sudden and most unexpected change in his daughter's destiny which had taken place. "Ye may either gie her awa or tak her yersel, just as ye like; for, by my faith, ye seem to be a guid honest chiel, be ye wha ye like, as the curate says."

"Well, then, since you place her at my disposal, I here give her to Davie Linn o' Partick—and may he always continue to deserve her!"

This conveyance of the fair Mcenie, the curate lost no time in legalising and confirming. When the ceremony was completed, "Now," said the stranger, "if there be a

fiddler or piper in all Govan who will play to us for love or money, let him be brought here instantly, and we'll finish as well as we've begun. By St Bride, we'll have a night of it! What say you, Sir John?" And he turned to that gentleman with a smile. Will you condescend to honour us with your presence, and with as much good-humour as you can conveniently spare?"

"Oh, most certainly," replied the latter, laughing, "with all my heart."

The desired musician was procured, and made his appearance. The room was cleared, creature comforts were ordered in, in unsparing abundance, and such a night of mirth and fun ensued as, we believe, has not been seen since in the little village of Govan, and perhaps not often anywhere else. The curate danced and frisked about like a three-year-old; Sir John conducted himself with no less animation; but neither of them had the smallest chance with the gentleman in the darned hose. He kept the floor almost the whole night, whooping and hallooing in a most spirited manner, and dancing fully half the time with the bride, and the rest with her mother, the guidwife of Clayslaps, relieved occasionally by a turn-out with some young girls of the neighbourhood, whom the landlord of the Grilse and Gridiron had hurriedly brought together, on the principle of "the more the merrier." But time and tide wait on no man. Morning came, and the revellers prepared to depart to their several homes. The marriage party, including the bride and bridegroom, and Sir John Elphingstone, proceeded to the ferry, to which they were accompanied by him who had performed the principal character of the night. Having seen them all embarked, and having wished the young married couple every happiness, he stood on the shore for an instant, waved them a final adieu, retired by the way of the village, and was seen no more.

Within a week after the occurrence of the events just related, the worthy curate of Govan was surprised one day by receiving a letter from the Archbishop of Glasgow.

"What's wrang now?" said the curate to himself, as he opened it. "My dismissal, I suppose, for the irregularity o' my conduct at Ringan Scouler's the ither nicht."

It was not exactly so, as the reader will perceive. The letter ran thus:—

"At the recommendation of a high personage, I intend appointing you to the vacant rectorship of Govan. You will therefore repair immediately to me, either at my palace at Glasgow or my castle at Partick, that I may confer with you farther on the subject. DUNBAR, A. B. of G."

"Whe-e-e-ou!" ejaculated the curate, with a long-drawn expiration, when he had read this very pleasant document —"I smell a rat. 'Od, but it was stupid o' me no to think o't afore. I'm sure I micht hae kent him; for I've seen him twa or three times; but then he was in a green frock-coat o' the finest claith; a velvet bonnet, wi' ruby and feathers, was on his head; a chain o' gowd, worth five hundred merks, if it was worth a bodle, round his neck, and a gaucy sword by his side. Still I ought to hae kent him, for a' his clouted shoon and darned hose. But the cat's oot o' the pock; and, my word, a bonny beast it is!"

What does the good curate's hints and allegorical allusions mean? inquires the reader. Why, it means that the worthy man suspected—and we have no doubt his suspicion was perfectly correct—that the person in the darned hose was no other than James V., King of Scotland.

GLEANINGS OF THE COVENANT

I.—THE GRANDMOTHER'S NARRATIVE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the researches of Woodrow, and the more recent enlargement and excellent annotations of Dr Burns, we are quite conscious that a volume somewhat interesting might still be collected of additional and traditional atrocities, of which no written record remains, nor other, save the recollections *of recollections*—in other words, the remembrance which we and a few others possess of the narratives of our grandmothers whilst we were yet children. Our own maternal grandmother died at ninety-six—we ourselves are now in our sixtieth year; so that, deducting eight or nine years for our age previous to our taking an interest in such concerns, we have our grandmother existing before (say) 1695, which, deducting eight years of infancy, brings us to 1703, which is only twenty-five years posterior to the conclusion, and fifty-three to the commencement, of the atrocious twenty-eight years' persecution. It is then manifest, from this arithmetical computation, that our own grandmother, on whose truthful intentions we can rely with confidence, came into contact and conversation with those who were contemporaneous with the events and persons she referred to. This surely is no very violent or unsafe stretch of tradition; but, even though it were much more so, we would be disposed to yield to it somewhat more consideration than is generally done. Now-a-days, the pen and the press are almost the only recorders of passing and past events and circumstances; but, in the age to which we refer, this was not the case. The children of Israel were bound by a holy and inviolate law to record *verbally* to their children,

and those again to theirs, what the Lord had done for their forefathers. And on the same principle, and under the same comparative absence of written records, did our grandmothers receive from their immediate predecessors the revolting disclosures which they have handed down to us. There are here but two links in the chain—those, namely, which connect our grandmothers with their parents, and with us; but, had there been twenty—nay, fifty or a hundred links—we should not, on account of the high antiquity of such a tradition, have been disposed to dismiss it as altogether groundless, and not implying even the slightest authority. In illustration of this, we may adduce the facts, sufficiently well known and authenticated, which were disclosed about thirty years ago at Burgh-head, the ultimate extent of Roman conquest in Scotland. In that promontory, now inhabited by a scattered population, there remained, from age to age, a tradition that a Roman well had existed on the particular spot. There being a lack of water in the place, the inhabitants combined to have the locality opened, with the view of disclosing so useful and essential an element. They dug twenty and even thirty feet downwards, but made no disclosures; and were on the point of giving up the search, when the father of the late Duke of Gordon happening to pass, and to ascertain their object and their want of success, very generously supplied them with the means of making a further excavation. At last, to their no small surprise and delight, they came to a nicely built and rounded well-mouth, with a stair downwards to the bottom, and the bronze statues of Mercury and other heathen gods stuck into niches. This well remains to this hour, and may be visited by the traveller along the Moray Frith, as an indisputable and indelible evidence of the value of traditions in ages when almost no other means of record existed. True, such traditions are deeply coloured and tinged by the prejudices of the age in which they originated

—allowance as to exaggeration must be made for excited feelings and outraged opinions; but still the groundwork may in general be depended on. The old, and perhaps vulgar, proverb, "There is aye SOME water where the stirkie drowns!" applies in this case with a conclusive force; and we may rely upon it, even from the collateral and written evidence of parties and partisans on all sides, that nothing which mere tradition has hinted at can exceed, in characters of genuine cruelty and downright bloodshed and murder, those historical statements which have reached us.

True, a writer lately deceased, whose memory is immortal, and whose writings will survive whilst national feelings and the vitality of high talent remain, has given us a somewhat chivalrous and attractive character of the most distinguished actor in the atrocities of the fearful time; and it is to be more than lamented—to be deplored—that an early and habitual, and ultimately constitutional, leaning to aristocratic and chivalrous views should have induced such a writer as Sir Walter Scott to draw such an interesting picture of the really infamous "Clavers"—of him who, for a piece of morning pastime, could, with his own pistol, blow out a husband's brains, without law or trial, and that in the presence of his wife and infant family! But the great body of historians are on the side of truth and tradition; and the recently-published, and still publishing, Life by Lockhart has unfolded, and will yet unfold, those leanings of the great novelist which have occasioned so lamentable a deviation from real history.

Under the shelter, then, of these preliminary observations, we proceed with such notices and statements as we have heard repeated, or seen in manuscripts which have (as we believe) never been printed. And we shall give these notices and statements as they were given to us—surrounded by a halo of superstition, and involving much belief which

is now, happily or unhappily—we do not say which—completely exploded.

Oh, my bairn! these were fearful times!—(Grandmother *loquitur*)—ay, and atweel war *they*. My own mother has again and again made my hair stand on end, and my heart-blood run cold at her relations.

Ye ken Auchincairn, my bairn; and maybe, whan ye were seeking for hawks' nests, ye hae searched the White-stane Cleughs. Aweel, ye maybe hae seen, or maybe no—for young hearts and een like yours (O sirs! mine are now dim and sair!) tak little tent o' sic-like things; but, my bonny bairn, though tent it ye didna, true it is, and of verity, that, at the very bottom o' that steep and fearfu linn, there is a rock, a stane like a blue whunstane; and owre that stane the water has run for years and years, and the winds and the rains of heaven hae dashed and plashed against it; but still that stane remains (dear me, I'm amaist greeting!)—it remains stained and spotted *wi' bluid*. And that bluid, my dear bairn, is o' the bluid that rins in yer ain veins—it is the bluid o' William Harkness, my own faither's brother. Weel, and ye shall hear; for my mother used to tell me the langsyne stories sae aft, that I can just repeat them in her ain words. Weel, it was the month of October, and the nights were beginning to lengthen; and the puir persecuted saints, that had taen to the *outside* a' simmer, and were seldom, if ever, to be seen in the *inside*, were beginning to pop in again nows and thans, when they thought Dalyel, and Johnston, and Clavers, and Douglas, and the rest o' the murdering gang, war elsewhere. Aweel, as I am telling ye, yer granduncle cam hame to his ain brother's house; it might be about the dawn o' the morning, whan a' the house, except his brother, were sleeping, and he had got a cog o' crap whey on his knee, wi' a barley scone—for glad, glad was he to get it; and he had just finished saying the grace, and was conversing quietly like,

and in whisper, wi' his ain brother, when what should he hear, but a rap at the kitchen-door, and a voice pouring in through the keyhole—

"Willie Harkness! Willie Harkness! the Philistines are upon ye! They are just now crossing the Pothouseburn."

I trow when he heard that, he wasna lang in clearing the closs, and takin doun the shank, straight for the foot of the Whiteside Linn, where the cave was in which he had for weeks and months been concealed. It was now, ye see, the grey o' the morning, and things could be seen moving at some distance. Just as my uncle was about to enter the bramble-bushes at the foot o' the linn, he was met by a trooper on horseback.

"Stand!" said a voice, in accents of Satan; "stand, this moment, and surrender; or your life is not worth three snuffs of a Covenanter's mull.'

My uncle kent weel the consequences of standing, and of being taken captive; and ye see, my bairn, life is sweet to us a'; sae he e'en dashed into the thicket, and, in an instant o' time, and ere the dragoon could shoulder his musket, he was tumbling head-foremost (but holding by the branches) towards the bottom of Whiteside Linn. There lay my worthy uncle, breathless, and motionless, and silent, expecting every moment that the dragoon would dismount and secure him. However, the man o' sin contented himsel wi' firing several times (at random) into the linn. The last shot which was fired took effect on my uncle's knee; the blood sprung from it, and he fainted. As God would have it, at this time no further pursuit was attempted, and my uncle was lame for life. The blood still remains on the stane, as witness against the unholy hand that shed it. But, alas! we are a' erring creatures; and who knows but even a dragoon may get repentance and find mercy! God forbid, my wee man, that we should condemn ony ane, even a persecutor, to eternal damnation! It's

awfu—it's fearfu! But that's no a' ye shall hear. When the trooper came up to the house, and joined his party, he repeated what had passed, and a search was set about in the linn for my uncle; but William had by this time crippen into his cauld, dripping cave, over which the water spouted in a cascade, and thus concealed him from their search; sae, after marking the blood, and almost raving like bloodhounds with disappointment, they tied up a servant girl—whom they had first abused in the most unseemly and beastly manner—to a tree, and there they left her, incapable, though she had been able, of freeing herself. She was relieved in an hour; but never recovered either the shame or the cruelty. She died, and her grave is in the east corner, near the large bushy tree in Closeburn kirkyard. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Muckle better, my dear, was her fate, though seemingly a hard one, than that o' the ungodly curate o' Closeburn—o' him wha was informer against the puir persecuted remnant, and wha, through the instrumentality o' his spies and informers, had occasioned a' this murder and cruelty. Ye shall hear. He—I mean, my bairn, the curate—had been hurlin the folk, whether they would or no, to the kirk, for weeks, in carts and hurdles—for oh, they liked his cauld, moral harangues ill, and his conduct far waur. He had even got the laird to refuse burial in the kirkyard to ony who refused to hear his fushionless preaching. Puir Nanny Walker's funeral (she who had been sae horribly murdered) was to tak place on sic a day. The curate had heard o' this, and he was resolved to oppose the interment. But God's ways, my wean, are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as ours; in his hands are the issues of life and of death; he killeth and he maketh alive—blessed be his name, for ever, amen! Weel, as I was telling ye, out cam the curate, raging, running, and stamping like a madman; coming down his ain

entry like a roaring lion, and swearing—for he stuck at naething—that Nanny Walker's vile Covenanting heart should never rot in Closeburn kirkyard. Aweel, when he had just reached the kirk stile, and was in the act o' lifting up his hand against them who were bearing the coffin into the kirkyard, what think ye, my bairn, happened? The ungodly man, with his mouth open in cursing, and his hand uplifted to strike, instantly fell down on the flagstanes, uttered but one groan, and expired! Ye see, my bairn, what a fearfu thing it is to persecute, and then to fall into the hands o' an angry and avenging God. Oh, may never descendant o' mine deserve or meet wi' sic a fate! But there is mair to tell ye still. Just at the time when this fearfu visitation o' Providence took place, the family o' Auchincairn war a' engaged wi' the Buik, whan *in* should rush wha but daft Gibbie Galloway, wha had never spoken a sensible word in his life—for he was a born innocent, he and his mither afore him! Weel, and to be sure, just about this time, for they compared it afterwards, *in* Gibbie stammered into the kitchen, whar they war a' convened, and interrupted the guidman's prayer, wha happened at the time to be prayin to the Lord for vengeance against the ungodly curate:—

"Haud at him," said Gibby—"haud at him! he's 'ust at the pit-brow!"

Ay, fearfu, sirs—thae war awfu times!

I.—THE COVENANTERS' MARCH.

The narratives of the Rev. Mr Frazer of Ainess, as well as those of Quentin Dick, William M'Millan, and Mr Robert M'Lellan, Laird of Balmagechan—all sufferers by, and MS. historians of the same events—we have carefully perused; and it is from a collection of these hitherto unpublished MSS. that the following paper is composed.

Mr Frazer had gone to London about the end of the year

1676, and had continued there till 1685, when he was seized, along with the Laird of Balmagechan, in Galloway, whilst they were listening to the instructions of the Rev. Mr Alexander Shields, the celebrated author of the "Hynd let loose," and forwarded by sea, under fetter and hatchway, to Leith. After a variety of tossing and council-questioning, as was the order of the day at this time, they were marched from the Canongate Tolbooth, along with upwards of 200 prisoners, to Dunnottar Castle in Kincardineshire.

Of the sudden and unexpected summoning which they experienced, the reverend autobiographer speaks in these terms:—

"We were engaged, as was usual with us in our Babel captivity, in singing a psalm. It was our evening sacrifice, and whilst the sun was sinking ayont the Pentlands. The voice of a godly and much-tried woman, Euphan Thriepland, ascended clear and full of heavenly melody above the rest. The prison-door was suddenly thrown open, and we at first imagined—alas!—that our captivity had ended; but it was not so. The Lord saw meet to put us to still severer trials. We were marched, under the command of Colonel Douglas, to Leith. This poor woman, who was labouring under great bodily weakness, pled hard and strove sair for leave to stay behind. But she was mounted behind a corporal, and, amidst many an obscene jest and much blasphemous language, conveyed to the pier at Leith."

Next morning, we find the whole prisoners put up in the most indecent and uncomfortable manner in two rooms of the Tolbooth at Burntisland, and undergoing an examination before the Laird of Gosford, as to their opinions of allegiance and absolute supremacy. Forty acknowledged King James as head of our Presbyterian Church, and superior lord over all law and authority in the kingdom; and the forty-first was standing in the presence of the oath administrator, with his hand uplifted, and in the very act of fol-

lowing the example of his brethren, when his aunt, Euphan Thriepland, *alias* M'Birnie (for her husband's name was such), advancing with difficulty towards the table, thus proceeded, with violent gesticulation, and in a firm tone of voice, to address her nephew. Here we use the words of the Laird of Balmagechan, who has given the whole scene with singular force and fidelity:—

"Jamie M'Birnie, what's that ye're about? Down wi' yer hand, man!—down wi' yer hand, this moment!—or ye may weel expect it to rot aff by the shackle-bane, man! Ye're but a young man, Jamie, and muckle atweel ye seem to require counsel. Had Peter M'Birnie, yer worthy faither —now with his Maker—stood where I now (though with tottering joints and a feeble voice) stand, he would neither have held his peace nor withheld his admonition. He would rather hae seen that hand—now stretched oot to abjure Christ and his Covenanted Kirk—burning and frying in the hettest flame, than hae witnessed the waefu sicht I now see. It's weel wi' him!—oh, it's weel wi' him, that his eyes are shut on earth, and that, in heaven, there is nae annoyance; otherwise, sair, sair would his heart hae been, to see my sister's wean devoting himsel wi' his ain uplifted hand to Satan. O Jamie, what says the Bible? It says awfu things to you, Jamie—it says, 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, for it is better to go into heaven with one eye, than that the whole body'—Jamie, mark that! the whole body—'should be cast into hell fire.' And is not an eye dearer than a hand, and must not the dearest member be sacrificed, if it stand in the way of the soul's salvation? Ye may own King James, and muckle thanks ye'll get for't; and ye may abjure and renounce Christ, and ye'll sune see wha will gain or lose by that. And ye may adhere to the king's curates, or to the bishops' curates, and starve at the breast o' a *yeld*, a milkless mither; but tak tent that ye dinna feed and nourish in your bosom a fearful *worm*, that

winna die nor lie still, but will gnaw and gnaw as lang as the fire burns and isna quenched."

Jamie M'Birnie's hand continued to fall gradually during this address, and, when his aunt had concluded, his arm hung pendulous and seemingly powerless by his side. At this instant, a young woman of uncommon personal attractions was seen hurrying from a boat which had just landed. She had scarcely set foot on shore, when a commotion was observed in the court, and a face full of anguish and despair was presented to the party assembled in the Tolbooth. The Laird of Gosford, after cursing the aunt for an old Covenanting hag, had just put the question of abjuration to Jamie for the last time. Jamie now remained inflexible, and was immediately ordered to be handcuffed, and marched with the rest to Dunnottar Castle. Hereupon, as the Laird of Balmagechan expresses it—The maiden, who was fair to look upon, pushed herself suddenly forward, and rushed into the arms of her lover—for such he behoved, from her words and her conduct, to be.

"O Jamie, Jamie, tak the oath—tak the oath—tak ony oath—tak onything; do a' that they bid you do; say a' that they bid ye say—rather than leave yer ain Jeanie Wilson to break her heart wi' downright greeting. O Jamie, we were to be married, ye ken, at Martinmas; and I have athing ready, and the bit house is taen, and ye can work outby, and I can spin within, and—and—but, O Jamie, speak, man, just speak, and say ye'll tak the oath. Haud up yer hand!" Hereupon she lifted his seemingly powerless right hand, till it came to a level with his head. "Look there, sir," addressing Gosford; "look there—swear him, man, swear him, man; he's willing, dinna ye see, to swear—what for dinna ye swear him?"

Being informed that the oath must be voluntary, and his hand not be propped, with great reluctance, and looking in Jamie's face with a look of inexpressible persuasion, she

whispered something in his ear which was inaudible, and retired a few paces from her station. No sooner, however, had she done so, than the hand. as if by the law of gravitation, resumed its former position, and a loud scream indicated that the young heart of Jeanie had found a temporary stillness in insensibility. The poor creature was borne out of court, amidst some sympathy even from the hardened and merciless soldiery; and Jamie, now a stupid, passive clod, was handcuffed, and ordered to march.

Lieutenant Beaton of Kilrennie commanded the detachment to which was intrusted the execution of the higher orders. They were all compelled to walk, with the exception of Euphan Thriepland, who was mounted, as formerly, behind a corporal, together with a poor lame schoolmaster, whose feet were closely and most cruelly tied down to the sides of a wild and unbroken colt. Upon these two helpless and tormented beings, principally, did it please and amuse the commander and his men to exercise their wit and expend their jeers. At one time the schoolmaster was likened to a perched radish, and again he was "riding the stang" for his sins. Euphemia was designated "Dame Grunt," in humane allusion, no doubt, to the painful position which she occupied *à la croupe*, and which compelled her frequently to groan. Again she was accosted as the "mother of all saints," and the "true Blue Whigamore." One observed that the dominie would look wonderfully handsome in boots (referring, no doubt, to the instrument of torture); and another observed that the lady would wondrous well become a St Johnstone's cravat—namely, a halter. The foot-soldiers, who were armed with long pikes, made excellent application of their weapons; and ever and anon, as some weary wretch lagged behind, or some hungry or thirsty one seemed inclined to turn aside to procure food or drink, the "*argumentum a posteriori*" was applied vigorously and unsparingly. The people of Fife, who were universally

favourably disposed toward the prisoners, flocked in upon their retired and out-of-the-way route with every kind of provision and refreshment; but, instead of being permitted to bestow them where they were needed, they were met with taunts, and in some cases with blows; and the food which was intended for the prisoners was uniformly devoured by their tormentors, or wasted and destroyed in the very presence, and under the very eyes, of those who were almost famishing for hunger. A strolling piper, who happened to be crossing their route, was sportively enlisted into their service, and compelled, like Barton at Bannockburn, to play, very much to his own annoyance, such tunes as "The Whigs o' Fife," well known to be offensive to the friends of the Covenant.

"It was, indeed," says the Rev. Mr Frazer, with more of naïvete and good-humour than might have been expected —"it was, indeed, an uncommon sight to behold a large and mixed company of men and women, but indifferently clad and ill-assorted, marching over muirs and hill-sides, with a roaring bagpipe at their tail; the piper puffing and blowing, and ever and anon casting a suspicious look behind, towards the pike points, which were occasionally applied to his person in a manner the least ceremonious possible." Might not this group form an appropriate subject for an Allan, a Wilkie, or a Harvey? About dusk the party had skirted the Lomonts, and were billeted for the night in the poor, but pleasantly-situated, village of Freuchie. Each head of a family was made answerable with his property and life for the persons of those prisoners who were committed to his charge. And it is worthy of notice that not one of those poor oppressed and insulted sufferers—who were all day long endeavouring to escape—once attempted to implicate a single individual amongst all their kind and hospitable landlords.

Upon rallying their numbers next morning, it was found

that one aged individual, a forebear of ours, of the name of Watson, had died of over-fatigue; and that the poor schoolmaster was so much injured by his horsemanship, that he could not possibly advance farther. When they arrived at the south ferry of the Tay, the tide did not serve, and a most cruel and barbarous scene was exhibited. A young man, the son of the Rev. Mr Frazer, with the view of making interest for his father's release, had endeavoured to escape during the night. He was challenged by a sentinel in passing along the rocks, and not answering instantly, was immediately shot dead on the spot. His head was cut from the body, and with the return of day, presented to the unfortunate and horrified parent, with these words, "There's the gallows face of your son!" Mr Frazer's own reflections on this scene deserve to be extracted from his written manuscripts:—"O my Charles! my dear, heart-broken Charles! thy mother's joy and thy father's hope, and prop, and comfort! To be thus deprived of thee, and for ever! But I am wrong, very wrong: I had thee only as a loan from the Lord; and I know well that he gives—

'And when he takes away,
He takes but what he gave.'

Thou hast perished in the ranks amidst the soldiers of Christ; and I doubt not that when the Captain of our salvation shall appear, thou wilt appear with him."

It would only fatigue and disgust the reader to give one tithe of the atrocities which were perpetrated during the whole march to Dunnottar Castle. Really, the manuscript narratives here concur in such statements as are calculated to make us conceive favourably of Hottentots and cannibals: children torn from their mothers' arms, and transfixed on pike points; a woman in labour thrown into a pool in the North Esk; lighted matches applied betwixt the fingers of old Euphan Thriepland, because she ventured to denounce

such atrocities, &c. &c. &c. Come we, then, after three or four days' march, to Dunnottar Castle.

The Castle of Dunnottar stands upon a rocky peninsula; and at the time of which we are writing was only accessible by a drawbridge. It has been in successive years the scene of much contention and bloodshed. It was here that Sir William Wallace is said to have burned to the death not less than four thousand Southrons in one night. It was within these fire-seared and blackened walls that the unfortunate Marquis of Montrose renewed the horrors of conflagration; and it was here, too, that the brave Ogilvy so long and so determinedly defended our Scottish regalia against the soldiers of the Commonwealth. It was, too, from out these walls, that Mrs Granger, wife of the minister of Kinneff, conveyed away, packed up and concealed amidst a bundle of clothes, the emblems of Scottish independence; and that, after having concealed them till the Restoration, at one time beneath the pulpit, and at another betwixt the plies of a double-bottomed bed, she returned them, upon the accession of Charles II., to Mr Ogilvy, who, along with the Earl Marischal and keeper of the regalia, Keith, were rewarded for their fidelity, the one with a baronetcy, and the other with the earldom of Kintire; whilst neither this woman nor her husband, nor any of their posterity, have once yet been visited by any mark of royal or national gratitude:—

"Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores."

It is thus that the great man stands in the light of the small, and that the royal vision is prevented from penetrating beyond the objects in immediate juxtaposition.

This Castle of Dunnottar, which had so recently been honoured as the receptacle of the regalia, was now about to be converted into a state prison, and, like the Bass, to become subservient to the views of an alarmed and fluctuating council, at a time when the rebellion of the unfortunate

Monmouth in England, and of the haughty and ill-advised Argyle in Scotland, had set the whole kingdom in a ferment, either of hope or apprehension. Mr Frazer's narrative of the entrance of the prisoners into the castle, upon Sabbath the 24th day of May, 1685, is sufficiently graphic and intelligible:—

"We passed along," says he, "a narrow way or drawbridge, and from thence ascended under a covered road towards the castle, which stands high up, and looks down upon the sea from three of its sides. A person in the garb of a jailer, with a bunch of large and rusty keys in his hand, opened a door on the seaward side of the building, and we were very rudely and insultingly commanded to enter. 'Kennel up, there, kennel up, ye dogs of the Covenant!' were amongst the best terms which were applied to us.

"The Laird of Balmagechan being amongst the last to penetrate into this abode of stench, damp, darkness, suffocation, and death, a soldier made a lunge at him with the point of his pike. Balmagechan was a peaceable man and a Christian; but this was somewhat too much—so, turning round in an instant, and closing at once with his insulting tormentor, he fairly wrested the pike from the soldier's grasp, and, splintering it in shivers over his head, he added, 'Tak, then, that in the meantime, thou devil's gaet, to teach thee better manners!' The apartment into which, with scarcely room to stand, 177 (our numbers having thus diminished from 200, on the march) human beings were thrust was, in fact, dug out of the rock, and, unless by a small narrow window towards the sea, had no means of admitting either light or air. As the night advanced, the heat became intolerable, and a sense of suffocation, the most painful of any to which our frail nature can be exposed, seemed to threaten an excruciating, if not an immediate death. In vain we knocked, and called upon the

guard, and implored a little air, and asked water, for God and mercy's sake. We were only answered by scoffs and jeers. At last nature, in many instances being entirely worn out, gave way. Some turned their heads over upon the shoulder of the persons nearest them, as if in the act of drinking water, and expired—others lost their reason entirely, struck out furiously around them, tore their own hair and that of others, and then went off in strong and hideous convulsions. Happier were they, at this awful midnight hour, who entered this dungeon with a feeble step, and in a wasted state of bodily strength; for *their* struggle was short, and their death comparatively easy—*they* died ere midnight. But far otherwise was it with many upon whom God had bestowed youth, health, and unimpaired strength. They stood the contest long; and frequently, after they appeared to be dead, awoke again in renewed strength, and ten times increased suffering. After the fatal discovery was made, that the door was not to be opened, the rush toward the opposite window became absolutely intolerable. The feeble were trodden down, and even the strong wasted their strength in contending with each other.

Morning at last dawned, and our prison-door flew suddenly open. The governor's lady had learned our fate; and, even at the risk of giving offence to her lord, she had ordered us air and water, whilst *he still slept.* "O woman, woman," exclaims Mr Quentin Dick, in his MS. before me, "thou art, and hast ever been, an angel. What does not man—what do not we owe thee?"

In a word, more than the half perished on that dreadful night, and amongst those who were ultimately liberated by order in council, were the individuals who have been particularised in this narrative.

Reader, we inquire not into thy political creed—we ask not whether thou art a Whig or a Tory, a Conservative

or a Radical—we can allow thee to be an honest and conscientious man, on all these suppositions: all we ask of thee is this, "*Art thou a man?*" The inference is inevitable.

Perhaps some may wish to know what became of Euphan Thriepland, Jamie M'Birnie, and Jeanie Wilson. We are happy that, owing to an accidental occurrence, we can throw some light upon the subject. Last time we were in Dumfries-shire, and in Closeburn, our native parish, we read upon the door of a change-house, in the village of Croalchapel, this inscription, "Whisky, Ale, and British Spirits, sold here, by James M'Birnie." The coincidence of the name revived my long-obscured recollection of the past, and led, in fact, ultimately to the whole of this narrative. We learned, from an old bedrid woman, the grandmother of this James, that he of Dunnottar celebrity had returned to Edinburgh and married Jeanie Wilson; that he had taken auld aunt Euphan home to their dwelling; and had been employed for several years after the Revolution, as a nursery and seedsman, in Edinburgh; that, having realised a competency, they had ultimately retired to their native parish of Closeburn, and had tenanted a small farm called Stepends; that their son had been a drover, and unsuccessful even to bankruptcy; and that the family were now reduced to the condition which we beheld.

III.—PEDEN'S FAREWELL SERMON.

We believe there never was such a sad Sabbath witnessed, as that upon which nearly four hundred of the Established clergy of Scotland preached their farewell sermons and addresses to their several congregations. It was a day, as the historians of that period express it, of "wailing, and of loud lamentation, as the weeping of Jazer, when the lords of the heathen had broken down her principal plants; and as the mourning of Rachel, who wept for her children, and would not be comforted."

On the 4th day of October, 1662, a council, under the commission of the infatuated and ill-advised Middleton, was held at Glasgow; and, in an hour of brutal intoxication, it was resolved and decreed that all those ministers of the Church of Scotland who had, by a popular election, entered upon their cures since the year 1649, should, in the first instance, be arrested, nor permitted to resume their pulpits, or draw their stipends, till they had received a presentation at the hands of the lay patrons, and submitted to induction from the diocesan bishop. In other words, Presbytery, which had been so dearly purchased, and was so acceptable to the people of Scotland, was to be superseded by Prelacy; and the mandate of the prince, or of his privy council, was to be considered in future as *law*, in all matters whether civil or ecclesiastical. It was not to be supposed that the descendants and admirers of Knox, and Hamilton, and Welsh, and Melville could calmly and passively submit to this; and accordingly the 20th day of October—the last Sabbath which, without conformity to the orders in council, the proscribed ministers were permitted to preach—was a day anticipated with anxious feelings, and afterwards remembered to their dying day, by all who witnessed it. It was our fortune, in early life, to be acquainted with an old man, upwards of ninety, an inhabitant of the village of Glenluce, whose grandfather was actually present at the farewell or parting sermon which Mr Peden, the author of the famous prophecies which bear his name, delivered on this occasion to his parishioners. We have conversed with this aged chronicler so frequently and so fully upon the subject, that we believe we can give a pretty faithful report of what was then delivered by Peden.

I remember well (continued, according to my authority, the old chronicler)—I mind it well, it seems but as yesterday—the morning of this truly awful and not-to-be-forgotten day. It had been rain in the night-time, and the morning

was dark and cloudy—the mist trailed like the smoke o' a furnace, white and ragged, alang the hill-taps. The heavens above seemed, as it were, to scowl upon the earth beneath. I rose early, as was my wont on the Sabbath morning, and hitched away towards the tap o' the Briock. I had only continued, it micht be, an hour in private meditation and prayer, when I heard the eight-o'clock bells beginning to toll. Indeed, I could hear, from the place where I was, I may say, every bell in the presbytery. The sound o' these bells is still in my ears—it was unusually sweet and melodious; and yet there was something very melancholy in the sound. I thought on the blood of the saints by which these bells had been purchased; upon the many souls, now gone to a better place, who had been summoned to a preached gospel by these bells; and I thought, too, on the sad alteration which a few hours would produce, when the pulpits would be deserted by the worthy Presbyterian ministers who filled them, and be filled, it micht be, by Prelatical curates—wolves in sheep's clothing, and fushionless preachers at the best. Even at this early hour, I could see, every here and there, blue bonnets, and black-and-white plaids, and scarlet mantles, mixing with and coming forth every now and then from the broken and creeping mist. The Lord's own covenanted flock were e'en gaun awa to pluck a mouthfu (it micht be the last) o' halesome and sanctified pasture.

The doors o' the kirk o' New Luce had been thrown open early in the morning; but, owing to an immense concourse of people, a tent had been latterly erected on the brow face, immediately opposite to the kirk-stile, and the multitude had settled, and were, when we arrived, settling down, like bees around their queen, on all sides of it. Having advanced suddenly over the height, and come all at once within view of this goodly assembly, I found them engaged, as was their customary, till the minister's

appearance, in psalm-singing. A portion of the Thirty-second Psalm had been selected by the precentor, and he was in the act of *giving out*, as it is termed, these appropriate and comforting lines—

"Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt
From trouble set me free;
And with songs of deliverance
About shall compass me"—

when Peden made his appearance above the brow of the adjoining linn, where he had probably been engaged for some time in preparatory and private devotion. He advanced with the pulpit Bible under his arm, and with a rapid, though occasionally a hesitating, step. All eyes were at once turned upon him; but he seemed lost in meditation, and altogether careless or unconscious of his exposed situation. His figure was diminutive, but his frame athletic and his step elastic. He wore a blue bonnet, from beneath which his dark hair flowed out over his shoulders, long, lank, and dishevelled. His complexion was sallow, but his eyes dark, keen, and penetrating. He had neither gown nor band, but had his shirt-neck tied up with a narrow stock of uncommon whiteness. Thus habited, he approached the congregation, who rose up to make way for him, ascended the ladder attached to the back-door of the tent, and forthwith proceeded to the duties of the day.

"Therefore watch and remember; for the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.

These words of the text were read out in a firm, though somewhat shrill and squeaking tone of voice; and as he lifted up his eyes from the sacred page, and looked east and west around him, there was a general preparatory cough, and adjustment of position and dress, which clearly bespoke the protracted attention which was about to be given. And, truly, although he continued to discourse

from twelve o'clock till dusk, I cannot say that I felt tired or hungry. Nor did it appear that the speaker's strength or matter failed him—nay, he even rose into a degree of fervid and impressive eloquence towards the close which none who were present ever heard equalled.

"And now," my friends," continued he, in a concluding appeal to their consciences—"and now I am gaun to warn ye anent the future, as weel as to admonish you o' the past. Ye'll see and hear nae mair o' puir Sandy Peden after this day's wark is owre. See ye that puir bird" (at this moment a hawk had darted down, in view of the whole congregation, in pursuit of its prey)—"see ye that puir panting laverock, which has now crossed into that dark and deep linn, for safety and for refuge from the claws and the beak of its pursuer? I'll tell ye what, my freends—the twasome didna drift down this way frae that dark clud, and along that bleak heathery brae-face, for naething. They were sent, they were commissioned; and if ye had arisen to your feet, ere they passed, and cried, 'Shue!' ye couldna hae frichtened them oot o' their mission. They cam to testify o' a persecuted remnant, and o' a cruel pursuing foe—o' a kirk which will soon hae to betak hersel like a bird to the mountains, and o' an enemy which will not allow her to rest, by night nor by day, even in the dark recesses o' the rocks, or amidst the damp and cauld mosses o' the hills. They cam, and they war welcome, to gie auld Sandy a warning, too, and to bid him tak the bent as fast as possible; to flee, even this very nicht, for the pursuer is even nigh at hand. But, hooly, sirs, we maunna part till our wark is finished; as an auld writer has it—'till our work is finished, we are immortal.' I hae e'en dune my best, as saith an apostle, amang ye; and I hae this day the consolation, and that's no sma', to think that my puir exertions hae been rewarded wi' some sma' success. And had it been *His* plan, or *His* pleasure, to have permitted

me to lay down my auld banes, when I had nae mair use for them, beneath ane o' the through-stanes there, I canna say but I wad hae been content. But, since it's no His guid and sovereign pleasure, I hae ae request to mak before we separate this nicht, never in this place to meet again." (Hereupon the sobbing and the bursting forth of hitherto suppressed sorrow was almost universal.) "Ye maun a' stand upon your feet, and lift up your hands, and swear, before the great Head and Master o' the Presbyterian Kirk o' Scotland" (there was a general rising and show of hands, whilst the speaker continued), "that, till an independent Presbyterian minister ascend the pulpit, you will never enter the door o' that kirk mair; and let this be the solemn league and covenant betwixt you and me, and betwixt my God and your God, in all time coming! Amen! —so let it be!"

In this standing position, which we had thus almost insensibly assumed, the last prayer or benediction was heard, and the concluding psalm was sung—

"For he in his pavilion shall
Me hide in evil days,
In secret of his tent me hide,
And on a rock me raise."

I never listened to a sound or beheld a spectacle more overpowering. The night-cloud had come down the hill above us—the sun had set. It was twilight; and the united and full swing of the voice of praise ascended through the veil of evening, from the thousands of lips, even to the gate of heaven. Whilst we continued singing, our venerable pastor descended from the tent—the Word of God in his hand, and the accents of praise on his lips; and at the concluding line he stood fairly and visibly out by himself, upon the entry towards the east door of the kirk. Having shut the door and locked it, in the view and in the hearing of the people, he knocked upon it thrice

with the back of the pulpit Bible, accompanying this action with these words, audibly and distinctly pronounced—

"I arrest thee in my Master's name, that none ever enter by thee, save those who enter by the door of Presbytery." So saying, he ascended the wall at the kirk-stile, spread his arms abroad to their utmost stretch, and in the most solemn and impressive manner dismissed the multitude.

Although Peden was thus banished from that pulpit to which, during the civil wars, he had been elected by the unanimous voice of a most attached people, he did not thereupon, or therefore, refrain entirely from exercising his function as a minister of the Gospel; but, having betaken himself to those fastnesses which lie betwixt Wigton and Ayrshire, he was in the habit of assembling, occasionally, around him the greater part of his congregation, as well as many belonging to the neighbouring parishes. In the meantime, after several months' vacancy, a young and half-educated lad from Aberdeen was appointed by the government in the capacity of curate. This person was, of course, hated by the parish; but this hatred was exalted to abhorrence, in consequence of his immoral and unclerical life and conversation.

William Smith and Jessie Lawson were the children, the first of a respectable farmer, and the other of a pious, though poor widow woman. There had been some difficulties in the way of the lovers—

"For the course of true love never yet run smooth;"

but these had at last been removed, and the young couple were about to be united, with the consent of relatives, in the honourable bands of matrimony. But the young and dissolute curate had caught a glimpse of Jessie; and, having been fascinated by her beauty, had not been backward in signifying, both to mother and daughter, his honourable

(for they really were so in this case) intentions. Janet, however, was too sound a Covenanter to give her consent.

"Na, na," she continued; "my bairn, I wot weel, has been baptised by the holy Mr Welsh, and she has lang sucked in the milk o' the true and Covenanted Word, frae worthy and godly Mr Peden, and it will ill become her to turn her back on her first lover, for the sake o' ony yearthly concern whatever."

In the meantime winter drew on, with its frosts, and its blasts, and its snows, and the lovers became more and more anxious to be united in the bands of hallowed love, in consequence of the pressing and importunate addresses of the curate. Here, however, a difficulty occurred, which was, however, overcome, by bribing the schoolmaster, as session-clerk, to proclaim them to empty benches, and by obtaining Peden's consent to perform the marriage-ceremony on their producing the requisite evidence of proclamation. The place appointed was the Bogle Glen, and the time midnight, on the second day of January, 1684. The night—for such meetings were usually held during night—was stormy; there being a considerable degree of snow-drift; but Peden was not easily diverted from his purpose; nor was his audience unaccustomed to such exposures. So the night-meeting for religious worship took place beneath the Gleds' Craig, from the brow or apron of which the minister officiated. Beneath him, huddled together under plaids, stood his devoted and attentive congregation, whilst the moon looked down at intervals on a landscape over which a frosty wind was ever and anon carrying the snow-drift. Beside the speaker were arranged, on chairs and stools, some young women bearing children to be baptised, and the youthful couple about to be united in marriage. The usual service proceeded, and the voice of psalms was heard amidst the solemn stillness of the midnight hour. The children

were next baptised from an adjoining well, which presented itself opportunely, like the waters of Meribah, from a cleft of the rock. The young people had just been united, and Peden was in the act of pronouncing the usual benediction, when the tramp of horses' feet was suddenly heard; and, in an instant, a discharge of muskets indicated but too surely the nature of the assault. All was challenge, capture, and dispersion; through which the screams of the young bride and the menacing voice of the curate were distinctly heard.

About four o'clock of the same eventful night, the manse of New Luce was discovered to be on fire, and some hundreds of figures were seen congregated in frantic and menacing attitudes around it. At last a form was discovered, bearing off from the flames something which appeared to be inanimate. The curate's screams were heard from his bedroom-window, and, by the assistance of the military, who had now arrived, he was relieved by a rope from his critical situation; and the young lovers were next morning discovered, safe and uninjured, in their own home, and in each other's arms.

IV.—THE PERSECUTION OF THE M'MICHAELS.

The miseries of war are not confined to the battle-field and the actual return of the killed and wounded. There is an atmosphere of wo and intense suffering, which hangs dense and heavy over the whole theatre of war—the devastation and horrors of a wide-marching enemy, advancing like the simoom of the desert, and converting into a howling wilderness the peopled and rejoicing district. Life is extinguished by terror and deprivation, as well as by the sword; and with this difference, too, that the former process is so much the more severe that it is protracted and defenceless. Civil war is, in this respect in particular, the most revolting of all. The animosities and resentments of

opposing parties are greatly exasperated by proximity of situation and community of country; and the revenge of the stronger directed upon the weaker party is uniformly marked by many atrocities. Of this character was, unhappily, the latter period of the domination of Charles II., together with the whole four years of the Papistical infatuation of the second James. Men, women, and children were not only shot, drowned, and spiked, but thousands who escaped this extreme fate, were so worn out by watchings, and cold, and hunger, and mental anxieties, as to fall under the power of diseases from which they never recovered.

An instance illustrative of these remarks occurred, according to invariable tradition (partly oral, and partly written), in the Pass of Dalveen, one of the wildest and most sublime localities in Dumfries-shire. In the days of which we speak, there were no mail-coaches, nor did the public road from Edinburgh to Dumfries pass, as now, through that most fearfully sublime ravine; all *then* was seclusion and solitude in that mountain retirement, where the winds met and mingled from many a converging glen; and the eagle and the raven divided the supremacy above. The site of the shepherd's shieling is indeed still ascertainable by the depth of verdure which marks the departed walls; and the traveller may see it by the burn-side, almost half-way down the pass.

The family which, during the latter period of the eight-and-twenty years' persecution, occupied this humble dwelling was named M'Michael. There were two brothers of that name; Daniel, who was a bachelor, and Gilbert, who was married, and the father of a son, now a lad of ten or twelve, and two daughters, still younger. The mother of these children was a M'Caig, a name immortalised in the annals of persecution. The two brothers, Gilbert and Daniel, had rendered themselves peculiarly obnoxious to

the spite and revenge of the curate of Durrisdeer, by their refusing to attend ordinances; and their obtaining baptism, and even, as times and occasions offered, the *sealing* ordinance of the Supper, from the hands of worthy Mr Welsh. Besides all this, when hard pursued one day in the pass, Daniel and Gilbert had defended themselves against a whole troop of Douglas' dragoons, by occupying the rocky summits of the Lowther Hills, and precipitating loose and rebounding rocks on the pursuers beneath. It was on this occasion that "Red Rob," of persecuting notoriety, had his shoulder-blade dislocated; and that Lieutenant James Douglas himself, in his extreme eagerness to scale the steep, had two of his front teeth dislodged.

Winter 1686 was peculiarly severe, and the proximity of Drumlanrig Castle, the residence of the Queensberry Douglases, rendered it exceedingly unsafe for the two obnoxious brothers, in particular, to visit their home, unless it were by snatches, and at the dead hour of night. The natural consequence of all this was, that both brothers lost their health, and that Gilbert, in particular, who was constitutionally infirm, contracted, or rather exasperated, a bad cough, which threatened serious consequences. It is quite true that a warm bed and the comforts of home might have done much for the complaint; but Gilbert's ordinary bedroom was the damp extremity of a hollow in a rock, without fire, and with his plaid alone as a nightly couch and covering. It was on a cold and drifty day in the month of January, that Gilbert, in the presence of his family, and under hourly apprehension of a visit from the barbarous Douglas, called his family around him, and, leaning upon the bosom of his beloved wife, addressed them in words to the following effect:—

"My dearest wife, my dear children, and my beloved Daniel, stand round me, for I am dying." Thereupon there was much weeping, and the poor woman had to be carried

out of the room, nearly insensible. This pause was employed by Gilbert in secret prayer and ejaculation—

"Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!—Lord, comfort the widow and the fatherless!—Lord, give strength for trial, and faith for dying like a Christian!"

When the poor widow had been so far recovered as to be able to return to the bedside, the dying man proceeded, with frequent pauses and much weakness, thus:—

"I hope I may say, though at an infinite distance, with the apostle Paul, I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith—the faith of my Saviour, of his holy apostles, and of our Covenanted Kirk. I have kept it in bad report, as well as in good—in the day of her extreme suffering, as well as when godly Mr Brown was minister of Durrisdeer. They have driven me from my humble but happy home, and from my wife and children, to the mountain and the cave; but I have ever said—

'I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid,
My safety cometh from the Lord.'

And I have ever found it so. I have been shot at, pursued, hunted like a wild beast, and exposed to disease, and pain, and extreme weakness—whilst I was, unless at intervals, denied the voice that soothes, the truth that cheers, and the looks of sympathy that mitigate in the extremest suffering; and I am now, if it shall please God to withhold for a little the foot of the merciless and the ungodly—I am now about to close my testimony by sealing it with my latest breath."

This exertion was too much for his exhausted strength, and it seemed to all that life had fled; when, after a few short and heavy respirations, he again proceeded—"Lord, give me strength for this last, this parting effort in this our covenanted cause!—Now, my dearly beloved, I leave you; for I hear my Master's call, and the Spirit and the Bride

say, Come! I leave you with this last, this dying advice: Let nothing deprive you of your crown, hold fast your integrity; for He whom you will serve will come quickly, and terrible will his coming be to all his enemies."

"Enemies, indeed!" vociferated Lieutenant Douglas, who had unperceived entered the apartment: "those enemies, friend Gibby, are nearer, I trow, than ye wot, and ready, with leave of this good company here, to take special care that his majesty's enemies shall be suitably provided for. Come, budge, old Benty, and you too of the lion's den. Come—my lambs, here, will be more difficult to manage than the *lions* of your Jewish namesake. Come, Mr Dan—up, and be going; for the day breaketh apace, and it will be pleasant pastime just to give us a stave of the death psalm under the old thorn, on the brae face yonder. Red Rob's shoulder, here, has sworn a solemn league and covenant against you; and, as to my two front teeth, they are complete nonconformists to Whigs and Whiggery, through all generations. Amen!"

In vain was all this profane barbarity poured on the ears of the dead man; old Gilbert had breathed his last at the very first perception of Douglas' presence—his God had in mercy withdrawn him from his last and most severe trial.

"Look there! look there! look there!" were the first articulate accents which crossed the lips of the distracted widow; "look, ye sons o' Belial—ye men o' bluid—on the pale and lifeless victim o' yer horrid persecution. Ay, aff wi' him!" (for Douglas had now approached the bed, as if to ascertain that no deception had been practised upon him)—"aff wi' him, to the croft, or to the maiden, or to the thorn-tree! shoot him, head him, hang him—ah!—ha!—ha!—ha!" (Hysterically screaming.) "He has escaped ye a'. Yer bullets canna pierce him; yer flames canna scorch him; yer malice canna reach him yonder." (Pointing at the same time upwards.) "There, even there. whar ye and yer band

shall never enter, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary, ay, thank God! the weary are at rest. Rest *here*, indeed, they had none; but *there* they shall rest, when ye shall lie tormented!"

"Come, come, Mother Testimony, give us no more of your blarney. Let us only over the shank yonder, and you and your whelps there may yelp and howl till the day of judgment, if you please. But as for you, friend Dan" (speaking ironically, and imitating the Covenanting language and manner), "does the Spirit move thee to budge? —has the Lord dealt bountifully with thee?—and will he 'save thee from six troubles, yea, from seven?' Come, come, friend," taking him rudely by the arm, and pulling him, with the assistance of Red Rob, towards the door. 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come;' there is a *maiden* longing for thy embrace—yea, a maiden whose lovers have been many, and whose embrace is somewhat close. But she, having taken up her residence in the guid town of Edinburgh, is afar off; but, lest thou shouldst feel disappointment, my lambs here have become somewhat frisky of late, and they will be most happy to give thee a little matrimonial music, to the tune of 'Make ready, present, fire!'"

Daniel M'Michael had long been accustomed to view death as a messenger of peace. His days—now manifestly numbered—had been sorely troubled. His faith in his Saviour was, with him, not a fluctuating, but a fixed principle; like Stephen, he might ascend to see heaven opened —and his soul was long absent in fervent prayer. He prayed for a persecuted kirk, for a persecuted remnant, for his friends, and for his enemies, even those whose hands were raised against his life.

"The guid Lord," said he, "forgive ye, for ye know not what ye do. The thief on the cross was forgiven; David, the murderer, was forgiven; and e'en Judas himself may

have obtained mercy. Oh, ye puir, infatuated, godless band! it is not for myself that I pray—it is for you; for, when the day of wrath arrives, where will ye flee to? To the hills?—they will be cast into the sea. To the rocks?—they will have melted with fervent heat. To the linns and the glens?—but where will ye find them, in that great and notable day of the Lord ——"

Daniel was proceeding thus, when Red Rob struck him over the head with the handle of his sword.

"Down to the earth with thee and thy everlasting jaw. We want none of thy prayers and petitionings. We are King Charles' men, and our God is our captain, our reward our pay, our heaven is our mess-room, and our eternity an hour's kissing of a bonny lass."

Here the commander interfered, and the poor victim was raised, though scarcely able to stand on his legs, from the stun of the blow.

"And now," said Douglas, "for the last time, wilt thou conform, and preserve thy life, or die?"

The poor man groaned, and fell on his knees. The band was removed to a distance, and in a few seconds the smoke rose white and whirling from the hill-side. The work of death was done!

There is a small clump of old thorns which faces the high-road from Dumfries to Edinburgh, as it enters the Pass of Dalveen from the south. At the lower extremity of this woodland patch, there is a grey rock or stone, covered with a thick coating of moss. It was whilst resting against this stone, that Daniel M'Michael was shot, about half-an-hour posterior to the cruelties which have been narrated.

A stone, with a suitable inscription, has been placed over the mangled remains of this good man in the churchyard of Durrisdeer; whilst a marble and gilt monument, of the most elegant and tasteful character, occupies the whole of the aisle or nave of the church. The latter monument per-

pctuates the memory and the virtues of the noble family of Douglas; whilst the former rude and now mutilated flag-stone mentions an act of atrocity perpetrated by a cadet of the family. In that day when the secrets of families and individuals shall be made known, it shall be manifested whose memory and virtues best deserve to be perpetuated.

The eldest daughter of Mrs Janet M'Michael or M'Caig was married, after the Revolution, to the second son (John) of Thomas Harkness of Mitchelslacks, from whom, in a lineal descent, the author of these scraps derives his birth. Is it to be wondered at, then, that we feel, through every drop of blood and ramification of nerves, a devotedness to the great cause of constitutional freedom and rational reform? But we hope the cause of political liberty may never be mixed up with the concerns of that Church which our ancestors founded on the dead bodies of martyrs, and cemented with their blood. We may return to this subject again, for we have yet many recollections to record.

THE STORY OF TOM BERTRAM.

Poor Tom Bertram! His story is a sad one; and yet I love to talk of it. It affords me a melancholy pleasure, in my old age, to conjure up the memories of the past, and to recall those happy days when Tom and I enjoyed together the freshness of youth and friendship. We were born in the same village of Roxburghshire, educated at the same Border school, entered as reefers together in the Honourable East India Company's service, and for fourteen years we were shipmates and firm friends. *His* voyage of life has long been over; and my crazy old hulk must founder ere long. But a truce to reflection. I must proceed with my story; and, if I do make myself tedious by my digressions, forgive the fond garrulity of an old sailor, who loves to linger upon every trifling recollection of a lost and valued friend.

Tom Bertram was an orphan, the son of a respectable farmer in Roxburghshire, who, on his death-bed, left his boy to the care and protection of my maternal uncle. It was impossible to live long in Tom's company without loving him. He was frank, daring, and active—a stranger to fear, and yet gentle and affectionate in the extreme; and when I add to this, that he was one of the handsomest youths ever beheld, can it be wondered at that he was an object of favour and admiration to all our village belles? Tom, however, laughed and joked, and talked sentiment with them all; but his heart remained untouched—his *time* had not yet come: and it was with a merry heart, and pleasant anticipations of the future, that he took his seat beside me on the coach that was to convey us to London. I will pass over our first impressions of all the novelties we saw and

heard there; suffice it to say, that the consciousness of being among strangers and aliens made us cling with the fonder warmth to each other; and every voyage we made together only served to strengthen the ties of our mutual regard. Years had passed by, and we had both risen gradually, though slowly, in our profession, and had always contrived to get appointed to the same ship. The last voyage we sailed together, I was fourth, and Tom fifth, mate of the Cornwallis, Indiaman; and we were both in the same watch. Every one acquainted with board-ship affairs knows how perfectly compatible the greatest intimacy and familiarity are with the strictest discipline; and how habitually and instantaneously the frankness of friendly intercourse gives place to the formality of nautical etiquette, whenever the duty of the ship requires their alternation. Tom and I were like brothers; but he never forgot that he was my junior officer, and never by any chance took advantage of my friendship for him by ill-timed familiarity. One fine moonlight night, we were lying becalmed within the tropics, whistling and invoking St Antonio in vain, for no breeze came. Beautiful are those calm tropical nights to the lovers of the picturesque, though sadly trying to the patience of the mariner. The *watch* were all lying in various attitudes about the decks in deep slumber; the helmsman was standing at his post—but whether asleep or awake was of little consequence, for the rudder was powerless; there was not a cloud in the dark blue sky, and the moon and stars were shining with almost dazzling brightness, and looking provokingly placid and happy; the surface of the sea was smooth as the smoothest glass, and in its undulating mirror gave back a vivid reflection of the brilliant canopy above; there was a long silvery path of light from the horizon to the ship; and the scene was altogether uncommonly beautiful, and uncommonly provoking to the officer of the watch. And there, in the

midst of all the splendour and beauty of nature, lay our noble ship, one of the finest specimens of man's proud art, helpless and powerless as a new-born babe—rolling, and tossing, and tumbling about—her lofty prow rising and falling as if doing homage to the majesty of ocean; while the moon and stars seemed to smile in quiet scorn at her unwieldy movements. Oh, the tedium and weariness of a calm night-watch at sea!—the anxious look around and aloft, to see if any *cat's-paw* is ruffling the water, or if any stray air has found its way into the *flying-kites;* the low, impatient whistle; and the common but unintelligible and unaccountable ejaculation of "Blow, good breeze, and I'll give you a soldier!" Bertram was standing at the gangway, with his arm and head resting on the rail, and muttering to himself. I approached him just in time to hear—

"For then sweet dreams of other days arise,
And memory breathes her vesper sigh to thee."

"Ah, Tom, sentimentalising? I have some hopes of you now. Who is the object of your vesper sigh, if it is a fair question?—which of the thousand-and-one flowers in your garden of love has left the memory of its fragrancy in your heart?"

"Nonsense, Harry," said he, colouring; "I have something else to do than to pine and sigh for a lady's love. What a lovely night it is!"

"Yes," said I—"lovely enough for a high-flying, sentimental lover, but anything but pleasing to a plain, straightforward fellow like myself. But, joking apart, Tom, you have not been yourself this voyage; you go through your duties actively enough, it is true, but evidently quite mechanically. Your heart is elsewhere. Do not be afraid of making me your confidant—I will not betray you; trust your secret sorrow, whatever it may be, to *me;* if I cannot assist, I can at all events sympathise with you."

"Thank you kindly, Harry," said he—"I believe you from my heart. You have made a right guess for once in your life. I *am* in love."

"Well, make a clean breast of it at once, and tell me who your Dulcinea is; that, if I have the felicity of her acquaintance, we may hold eloquent discourse of her charms together."

"Well, Harry, you remember Miss ——"

"Holloa! there's a breeze coming at last—beg your pardon, Tom," said I, springing up on the poop for a better view; and there it was, sure enough, coming up on the larboard quarter, with a cool, fresh, rippling sound, roughening the surface of the swell before it.

"Forecastle there!"

"Sir?" replied Tom.

"Rig out the foretopmast and topgallant-studdingsail booms, Mr Bertram, and bear a hand with the sails."

."Ay, ay, sir."

"Maintop there!—rig out the topgallant-studdingsail boom!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"All ready with the stunsails forward, sir," cried Bertram.

"Very well. Forward there the watch!—run the stunsails up. Forecastle there!—swing the lower boom!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

In twenty minutes the ship was under a cloud of canvas, and moving rapidly through the water, the ropes were all coiled down, and the watch again on their beam-ends.

"Stea-dy!" called the quartermaster.

"Steady it is!" answered the man at the helm.

"I told you so, Bill," muttered one of the afterguard to his neighbour—"I knowed as how we'd have a breeze when I throwed my old shoe overboard."

"Now, Tom," said I, "make an end of your confession.

You asked me if I remembered Miss —— what's her name?"

"Kate Fotheringham."

If a thunderbolt had fallen at my feet, it could hardly have startled me more than did the unexpected mention of that name. I *felt* myself turn pale—the blood seemed to creep and curdle in my veins, and a sensation of mortal sickness and faintness came over me.

Tom observed my emotion, and exclaimed, in great alarm—

"Harry, how ill you look! What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing," said I—"a sudden spasm—but it is gone."

And, with desperate resolution, I gulped down the emotion which almost choked my utterance, and listened with patience while Tom proceeded, with all a lover's enthusiasm, to expatiate upon the charms of his mistress. He had so long confined his feelings to his own bosom, that, when he gave them free vent, their sudden and torrent-like outpouring was almost overwhelming. Rapidly and fervidly did he depict his first sensations; glowingly and fondly did he dwell upon the personal charms and mental amiabilities of his adored one; and, in *burning* words, he expressed his happiness in the certainty that he was beloved again. Alas, poor fellow! he little knew that every kind expression of his mistress went like a dagger to the heart of his friend! And yet so it was; for, in the innermost recesses of my heart, hidden from all mortal knowledge save my own, I had enshrined an idol—and that idol was Kate Fotheringham. 'Tis true, I had bowed before it in vain. I had offered up to her the incense of my first love; it had filled the temple, but made no impression upon the divinity. My love was hopeless, but constant. But it is necessary that I should explain myself; and to do so I must go back.

The Rev. Thomas Fotheringham was minister of the Parish of L——, and the father of two beauteous daughters, of whom Kate was the youngest. She was indeed a lovely creature—full of life and animation, sparkling and joyous; her complexion was delicately brilliant, and her bright blue eyes shot forth their playful glances from the covert of the most beautiful flaxen ringlets in the world. When she shook back her hair from her forehead, and her laugh,

"Without any control
But the sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her soul,"

and displayed teeth of pearly whiteness, she was indeed a thing to be wondered at and admired.

Mr Fotheringham had been an intimate friend of my father, and I had gone to spend a few weeks at L—— Manse, on my last return home. When I had seen Kate some years before, she was a pretty, interesting child, and used, in her playfulness, to call me her sailor husband: how great was my surprise, when I met her again, to find the playful child transformed into the tall, graceful, elegant woman! It was impossible to see Kate Fotheringham without admiring her beauty: I soon found that it was impossible to know her without loving her. She was as good as she was lovely, and was almost adored by the poor of the parish, to whom she was like a ministering angel. Her great delight was in distributing food and clothing to the poor and needy; and her sweet smile and soothing tone of sympathy were balm to the melancholy mourner, and to the bruised and broken spirit. Was it wonderful that, living as I did in the most friendly intimacy with such a being, listening to her praises from all quarters, hearing the sweet music of her voice as she warbled the simple melodies of her native land—was it wonderful that I loved her? Yes! I more than loved her. Love is too tame, too commonplace a term for my feelings. I adored her—I bowed

female loveliness and amiability combined; and he felt that, with such a companion, he might reasonably expect to realise his brightest dreams of mundane happiness. He consulted my uncle, who had always loved him as a son, and who intended him to be his heir; and laying before him the state of his affections, told him that he waited but for his consent to prosecute his suit. My uncle was delighted with his confession, and with the object of his choice, and gave him his consent and blessing; at the same time giving him to understand that Kate should not marry a beggar. Kate's heart, almost unconsciously to herself, had long been his; and she was too frank and artless to attempt to veil it from him when he made his proposals. It was agreed that their marriage was to take place when he returned from his next voyage, and that, in the meantime, their engagement was to be kept secret.

Oh, how I had envied my happy rival! How often had I longed, with eager curiosity, to see the man who had gained the heart of such a glorious creature! And now he stood before me—the dearest friend of my heart, from whom I had never had but one concealment—he whom I had loved as a brother, and watched over with more than a brother's love—was the being who, unconsciously, stood between me and happiness—who had blighted and withered the fondest aspirations of my heart. Oh, the conflict of feelings within me! Had he but confided in me sooner, what misery might he not have spared me! Thank Heaven! friendship and justice conquered at last. I resolved to keep my secret, though my heart should break; his knowledge of it could not benefit me, but would only distress and grieve him, and, perhaps, cast a cloud over that friendship which was now the chief remaining solace of my life. It was with a smiling face, therefore, but with an aching bosom, that I shook hands with Tom that night; and well did I keep my secret, for he died in ignorance of it.

my heart before her very footsteps: but I felt that I was not loved again. The very frankness and innocent familiarity of her manner towards me, while it fascinated, maddened me; for I knew that I was wilfully deceiving myself; that she looked upon me as a friend—a brother—nothing more. Fool that I was!—knowing all this—knowing, in my own secret heart, that every day, every hour, I was only storing up bitterness for myself—I still fluttered round the flame that was consuming me. At last, one evening, my long-suppressed feelings burst forth. Some expression of Kate acted as a spark to the train of passion that was lying smouldering within my breast, and —— I know not what I said—but my heart was in the words; I only know that I was miserable. Kate was agitated, surprised, and affected. She esteemed and admired me, she said; but her heart was not her own. We parted with mutual sorrow, and with a promise, on her part, never to mention the occurrences of that evening; and with a determination on mine to smother my feelings, and with firm resolve to tear her image from my heart for ever. Weak and vain resolution!—that image will go with me to my grave.

Tom went on to tell me that he had gone, with my uncle, his guardian, on a visit to L——, three years before, and that he had not been long domesticated there before he felt the influence of those charms which had proved so fatal to my peace. He was the constant companion of the young ladies in all their rambles, had witnessed their various deeds of unostentatious charity and benevolence, and was in the habit of listening with pleasure to the warm and unsophisticated praises lavished upon them by every dependant and cottager around them. His heart had hitherto resisted the fascinations of beauty, and he had learned to look upon it as a "pretty plaything," accompanied, as he had hitherto seen it, with superficial accomplishments and frivolous employment. But here was all his fancy had ever pictured of

As we were going into the mess-berth next morning to breakfast, we met Ben, the servant, looking as grave as an owl, with a face as long as the maintop-bowline.

"What's the matter, Ben?" said Tom.

"O sir! we'll soon know what's the matter: the cow died this morning!"

Tom burst into a roar of laughter, and asked what that had to do with his long face.

"It's no laughing matter, sir," said the man; "I never knew any good come to a ship when the cow died: but we'll see before long."

We were both much amused at the man's newfangled superstition, as we thought it, as we had never before heard of this.

"I have been told a story," said I, "of a cat influencing the destinies of a ship, but I never heard a cow so highly honoured before."

"A cat!" said Tom—"what do you mean?"

"It's an old story," said I; "but, as you seem not to have heard it, I will enlighten you on the subject:—

Some years since, one of His Majesty's crack frigates had greatly distinguished herself, on the Mediterranean station, by the smartness and activity of her crew, her state of excellent discipline, and her great success in capturing prizes. For some time her good fortune seemed to have deserted her; day after day passed away, and not a *tangible* sail was to be seen; the time began to hang heavy on the hands of the crew, and discontent and disappointment were legible in their countenances. This state of things could not last long. The captain, a good and gallant seaman, perceived that the spirit of disaffection was busy among his crew, and determined to check it in the bud.

"Call the hands out, if you please, Mr Steady," said he to the first lieutenant.

The hands were called out; and when assembled on the

quarterdeck, the captain addressed them to the following effect:—

"My lads, you used to be as active and cheerful a set of fellows as I would wish to command; I used to be proud of you, for you seemed to take pleasure in your duty; but now you go about the decks sullen and discontented, and only work because you dare not disobey. If you have any grievances to complain of, come forward like men and say so, and I will redress them, if I can; but I tell you, once for all, I will have no sulkiness; and by Heaven! if I can't drive it out of you in any other way, I'll flog it out of you."

After a short pause, one of the captains of theforecastle stepped out from the crew, and twirling his hat in one hand, and scratching the back of his ear with the other, said—

"Please your honour, we haven't no grievances."

"Then what the devil's the matter with you all?"

"Why, sir ——" said the man, hesitatingly.

"Go on," said the captain—"I won't bite you."

"Why, then, sir," replied the captain of the forecastle, "we've never had no luck since you took that 'ere black cat on board."

The captain could not help laughing. "Well," said he, "that evil can soon be remedied. Midshipman, tell my steward to throw the cat overboard."

"O sir!" said the man, in great alarm, "do not throw him overboard—that would be worser still."

"Then, what the deuce do you want me to do with him?"

"Why, if your honour would send him ashore as he came aboard, in a boat."

"What a set of cursed ninnies!" muttered the captain. "Well," said he, "you have often exerted yourselves to please me, and it is but fair that I should do something to please you for once in a way."

The frigate stood in shore, and hove to, a boat was lowered, and the unlucky cat, safely deposited in a bread-bag, was

sent under charge of a midshipman to be landed at the nearest point. The boat returned in due time, and was hoisted up, the sails were filled and trimmed, when the man at the mast-head hailed the deck—

"A strange sail in sight ahead, sir!"

"All hands make sail in chase!" was the cry; and, before night, the cat-haters had taken a valuable prize.

"A strange coincidence, certainly," said Tom, "and most unfortunately calculated to strengthen the men in their superstition. I hope we shall have no such confirmation of Ben's panic about the cow."

We had a glorious breeze that morning on the quarter; the long swell, which had been so smooth and glassy the day before, was broken into short waves, which came rushing, and curling, and bursting under the ship's counter; the sky was covered with light mackerel clouds; every stitch of canvas we could carry was spread; the sails were all asleep, and the ship snoring through the water;—there was every appearance of a steady breeze, and of continued fine weather. A little after mid-day, the captain came on deck, and said to the officer of the watch, "Mr Freeman, what do you think of the weather?"

Mr Freeman, with a look of surprise, replied, "I never saw a finer day, sir; and there is every appearance of a steady breeze."

"Well," said he, "that's my opinion too; yet the glass is falling rapidly. I do not understand it. Send for Mr Sneerwell." And the chief mate made his appearance. He agreed in thinking that there was no sign of change in the weather.

"Well," said the captain, "my glass has never deceived me yet, and I will believe it now against my own opinion, and in spite of favourable appearances. You will pipe to dinner, if you please; and, when the people have had their time, call the hands out to shorten sail."

"Ay, ay, sir! Pipe to dinner!"

The breeze began gradually to freshen; and, by the time we had swallowed our dinner, we were glad to get our stun-sails and lofty sails in as fast as possible. A small dark cloud had appeared on the weather-beam, which gradually spread and spread, till the whole heaven was covered with an ominous darkness, and the wind increased so rapidly that there was barely time to execute the orders which followed each other in quick succession from the quarterdeck. Before one reef was taken in in the topsails, it was time to take in another; the courses were reefed, the mainsail furled, the topgallantyards sent on deck. Before midnight, we were under reefed foresail and close-reefed driver; and, before the morning watch, were hove to under stormstaysails. Tom had exerted himself greatly during the gale; and, when aloft in the maintop, had been struck on the temple by one of the points of the topsail which was shaking in the wind while reefing. The blow, though from so small a rope, had stunned him; and, when he recovered, he was obliged to be assisted down to his cot, where the doctor took a good quantity of blood from him. About this time, an epidemic disorder had shown itself among the crew, which spread rapidly, and in a short time our sick list amounted to six or seven-and-twenty. At first, the disease was not fatal; but, after a time, death followed in its footsteps, and the mortality became quite alarming and dispiriting to the survivors of the crew. The only officer who was seized with the disorder was my friend Tom, who had hardly recovered from the weakening effect of loss of blood, and whose constitution had been much shaken by severe illness abroad. Long and doubtful was the struggle between life and death; but at length the crisis of the disease was over, and he began slowly to recover. Oh! how often did I vow, while watching by his sick-bed, and bathing his burning hands and brow, never again to go to sea with one for whom I felt more than a

common regard! I thought it would be almost better to renounce the communion of intimate friendship altogether, than again to expose myself to the risk of such griei as I now felt in the prospect of losing my friend. Tom did no more duty for the remainder of the passage of five weeks, and was still very feeble when we arrived in the Downs. During that time, however, he used often to come on deck in my watch; and, if there were no particular ship's duty going on, we indulged in long conversations about the past, and in pleasant anticipations of the future. But, on whatever topic our conversations might commence, they always ended in the same subject—L—— Manse and its inmates. Kate Fotheringham, Kate Fotheringham, was the everlasting theme of Tom's tongue; even if I had never seen her, I might almost have painted her picture from his vivid descriptions of her.

"You forget, Tom," I have often said, "that I have seen this paragon of yours; you need not give me such a minute description of her."

"You *have* seen her, Harry! I *always* see her; her image is in my heart. It is out of the fulness of my heart that my mouth speaks. Oh! let me talk of her—the very sound of her name is like music to my ear. Kate, Kate Fotheringham—is it not a sweet name, Harry?"

"The name is pretty enough; but, my dear fellow, you are allowing your passion to run away with your senses altogether. For her sake, as well as your own, you must endeavour to restrain the violence of your feelings, which, in the present enfeebled state of your health, might produce fatal effects."

"Fatal!" said he—"nothing can be fatal to me as long as Kate Fotheringham's love remains to me. But, oh Harry! if I were to lose that, what would become of me?"

I was alarmed and distressed by the depth and violence of Tom's emotions; but I thought it better to allow him to

express them unreservedly, than to run the risk of adding to their intensity, by endeavouring to check and repress them. Among other plans for the future, he dwelt with much pleasure upon the prospect of giving our friends at L—— an agreeable surprise, by coming upon them unexpectedly, before they had heard of our arrival in England. Circumstances favoured us in this project. Our passage had been a quick one; and, the wind favouring us after we had passed the Downs, we ran right up the river at once. In consequence of our unexpectedly early arrival, there were no letters awaiting us; but we were not anxious on that score, as our last accounts were favourable. The day after our arrival at Blackwall, we obtained leave of absence, and set off (under the rose) for the north. When we arrived at the nearest town to L——, we left the coach, intending to hire a chaise or gig to take us on to the manse; but there had been a run on the road that day, and there was no conveyance to be obtained. Tom's mortification was extreme. I wished to remain till next day; but his impatience prevented his listening to reason.

"It's only a few miles, Harry! We can walk."

"In your present state," said I, "such an exertion may be prejudicial to you."

"I see you don't like to stretch your legs, Harry. I will go by myself; you can follow to-morrow!"

I had nothing further to say; so we ordered our baggage to be sent after us, and set off together. When we arrived near L——, instead of following the sweep of the road, and crossing the river by the bridge, by way of a short cut, we struck across the fields, and waded the stream. The moon was shining brightly, and the whole scene was flooded with light. On the summit of a green bank, sloping down to the river, lay the churchyard, near which stood the church, a venerable Gothic building, shaded by old and solemn-looking trees, standing like sentinels over the slumbers of the

tomb. Our path to the manse lay through the churchyard; and a feeling of sadness and of awe crept over us, as we saw the cold beautiful moonlight resting on the well-known graves of many of our early friends.

"Ah!" said I, "the churchyard has, at least, *one* tenant more since our departure. Whose can this handsome monument be?"

My eye glanced at the inscription, and a cold shudder came over me.

"Come on, Tom!" said I; "we have no time to dawdle here."

"Let me read this epitaph first."

"No, no," said I, trying to force him away. But it was too late—he had seen enough: and with a cry of unutterable anguish, he fell fainting in my arms. Poor Tom Bertram! Long years have passed, but that scene is fresh in my memory—my heart bleeds for him still! I laid him gently on the grass beside the tomb—the dying, as I thought, beside the dead. The tears blinded my eyes, as I endeavoured to read the sad inscription on the stone—"Sacred to the memory of Catherine, youngest daughter of the Rev. Thomas Fotheringham, minister of this parish." The long panegyric that followed—what had I to do with it then? I ran down to the river, and bringing some water in my hat, I dashed it in Tom's face, and after some time had the happiness to see him revive. He stared wildly at me, and exclaimed—

"Where am I?—Harry!"

"Here I am, dear Tom!"

"Oh! I have had such a dream!" His eye-glance fell upon the tomb.—"Merciful Heaven! is it true?" And leaning his head upon my breast, while his face turned deadly pale, he gasped for breath. At length, a burst of sorrow, such as I had seldom witnessed, relieved his overwrought feelings; he sobbed and wept as if his heart were

flowing out of him. I did not attempt to check or to console him; sorrow like his was, in its first bitterness, too deep and withering for consolation. Alas! I needed comfort for myself!

At length, the first violence of his feelings was exhausted, and he suffered me to lead him, unresistingly, to the manse, where we were received with the greatest kindness and sympathy by the sorrowing family. There we heard the sad particulars of our loss. Kate had fallen a victim to consumption some months before; the letter containing the melancholy news had not reached us. Poor Tom, exhausted by previous illness, and overcome by the dreadful shock he had experienced, was obliged to take to his bed. I hastened back to my ship, where I was detained some weeks. When I returned, Tom was dying. He knew me; and with a faint smile, and a hardly perceptible pressure of my hand, he murmured—

"I die happy, Harry. She prayed for me on her death-bed!"

THE COTTAR'S DAUGHTER.

THE parties to whom the following tale refers being still, we believe, alive, we must warn the reader that, though the story be true, the names employed are fictitious; but we beg also to add, that in this circumstance alone is the tale indebted to invention.

Young Edington of Wellwood was the son of a gentleman of large fortune, residing in Roxburghshire; but we shall not say in what particular part of that district. The noble residence of Wellwood—a huge castellated pile, rising in the midst of embowering woods and wide-spread lawns of the smoothest and brightest verdure—sufficiently bespoke the wealth of its owner; or, if this was not enough to give such assurance, the crowd of liveried menials that might be seen lounging about its magnificent portals, together with the splendid equipages that were ever and anon rolling to and from the lordly mansion, would have carried this conviction to the mind of the most casual observer.

The presumptive heir to all this grandeur was young Wellwood, who was an only child. At the period of our story, Harry (for such was his Christian name) was about four-and-twenty years of age. His education had been completed at Oxford some three years previous to this; and the interval had been spent in a tour on the Continent, from which he had now just returned, to reside some time with his father, before going abroad, to fill a high official situation, which the latter's great influence in the political world had procured for him.

Young Wellwood was a man of elegant figure, accom-

plished, and of singularly fascinating manners—recommendations of which he too often availed himself to accomplish very discreditable purposes, as the sequel of our story will show. He was not naturally of bad dispositions—we could almost say quite the contrary; nor did he love evil for its own sake; but his passions were too powerful for his moral principles—unsupported as these were by any auxiliary resolutions of his own.

Such, then, was young Edington of Wellwood; and, having thus briefly sketched his circumstances, situation, and character, we proceed to advert to the humble heroine of our tale.

At a short distance from Wellwood House, there is a pretty little village, which we shall take the liberty of calling Springfield. It is situated in a romantic dell or hollow, and occupies either side of a broad, clear, but shallow stream, that runs brawling through its very centre. Steep rocks, and in other places abrupt acclivities covered with verdure, and the whole overhung with "wild woods thick'ning green," form the boundaries of the narrow glen in which the village is situated. From this village, bands of young maidens—daughters of the labouring people by whom it is inhabited, and of others in poor circumstances —were in the habit of repairing to Wellwood House every morning during the summer season for supplies of milk; the excess of the dairy being sold at little more than a nominal value to every one in the neighbourhood who chose to apply for it. Amongst the young girls who used to frequent Wellwood House on this errand was Helen Gardenstone, the daughter of a poor widow woman who resided in Springfield. She was a girl with an appearance and manners of a kind rarely to be met with amongst those in her humble station in life. Her beauty did not lie in the mere glow of health, or in regularity of feature alone. Both of these, indeed, she possessed in an eminent degree; but the

chief captivations of her truly lovely countenance were to be found in the peculiar sweetness, grace, and native dignity of its expression, which the meanness of her circumstances had been unable to abase. In short, even the style of Helen Gardenstone's beauty, unaided by fashion, art, or education, as it was, was such as the daughter of the haughtiest peer of the realm might have been proud to own. But nature had not expended all her skill and pains on the countenance alone. She added a figure every way worthy of its loveliness; a figure whose elegance and fine proportions the simple but coarse garments she wore might impair, but could not conceal; and she finished the work by bestowing on this favoured creature a mild, gentle, and generous disposition; a heart formed for cherishing all the better qualities of female nature; and a degree of intelligence much surpassing that usually found amongst those of her years and class. Such was Helen Gardenstone, the daughter of the widow.

To resume our narrative. It was on a fine summer's morning, at the period to which our story refers, that Helen's mother came to her bedside, and, shaking her gently by the shoulder—for she was sound asleep—said, in a kindly tone—

"Helen, dear, it's time ye were awa to Wellwood for the milk."

Helen opened her bright eyes, smiled in her mother's face, started from her couch, and was soon ready to perform the morning duty to which she had been called.

"But I'm thinkin I'm late this mornin, mother," she said, on observing the advanced appearance of the day.

"Ou, ye're time aneugh, dear," replied her mother; "I didna like to wauken ye sooner, as ye were up sae late last nicht, and sae sair fatigued wi' the washin."

"Tuts, mother," rejoined Helen, "that was naething. Ye should hae made me jump at the usual time. I declare,

there they're comin back!" she abruptly added, having caught a glimpse of some of the village maidens returning with their pitchers of milk; and with this she hurried out of the house, with her little tin can, and, tripping lightly over the road, she soon reached the avenue leading to Wellwood House.

Helen was, indeed, later than usual on this morning; and one consequence of this was, that she had to go alone—for all those who used to accompany her had already been to Wellwood, and had returned; another consequence, and one fraught with much that was deeply interwoven with the future destiny of the unsuspecting girl—that all the inmates of Wellwood House were astir, and amongst these young Wellwood himself, who was sauntering in the avenue that led to the house at the very moment Helen entered it. They met. Wellwood, who had never happened to see her before, was struck with her extraordinary beauty. He threw himself in her way. He addressed her in flattering language. He watched her return from the house, learned everything from the artless girl regarding her situation and circumstances; and, from that hour, she engrossed all his thoughts, and became the sole object to which he devoted the dangerous powers of fascination which nature had given him, and art had improved. Nor did he exercise these powers in vain. Helen ultimately fell a victim to his wiles, and became the prey of the spoiler.

The story of the poor girl's misfortune soon spread abroad. It became the talk of the village; and many a burning face, and many an agonising pang, it cost her as she passed along, and heard the sneers, and taunts, and heartless jests to which that misfortune subjected her.

"The graceless cutty!" said one—and we must here remark that the merciless persecutions of this kind to which she was exposed proceeded almost entirely from those of her own sex—"nae better could happen her wi' her dressin

and her airs. No a madam in a' the land could be at man pains snoodin her hair than she was."

"Atweel, that's true," said a second; "and see what she has made o't, the vain, silly thing!"

"Made o't!" exclaimed another of these vulgar and heartless traducers; "my certie, she'll mak weel o't, I warrant ye. Young Wellwood 'll gie her silks and satins by the wab, and siller in gowpens. She'll no want—tak my word for that. We maun toil late and early, cummers, for our scanty mouthfu, and our bits o' duds; while the like o' her eats and drinks o' the best, without ever fylin her fingers."

"This 'll bring doun her pride, I'm thinkin," said a fourth. "I aye thocht she wad hae a fa', and was ne'er owre fond o' oor Mary gaun wi' her. Folk speak o' her beauty; but, for my part, I never could see ony beauty about her."

"Nor me either," chimed in a fifth; "I aye thocht her a puir, glaikit, silly-looking thing."

Much of such conversation as this the poor unfortunate girl frequently overheard; and much more of a similar kind was said which she did not hear. In short, there was not one, at least of her own sex, who expressed the smallest sympathy for her unhappy condition, or felt for her misfortune—not one who attempted to soothe her sorrows, or to lighten the burden of the poor girl's miseries—not one to treat her error with the lenity which their own liability to deviate from the straight path of moral rectitude ought to have inspired:—no, the poor girl's persecutors seemed to think that the abuse and defamation of her character shed an additional lustre on their own, and that, by her fall, they themselves were exalted. Strangers were they to the godlike sentiments expressed by him who says—

"Teach me to feel another's wo,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
Such mercy show to me."

When we said, however, that there was not one who felt for poor Helen's unhappy situation, we ought to have made a single exception. There was *one* who felt for her, and that most acutely. This one was her mother. The widow sorrowed, indeed, over the fall of her child, and many a bitter tear unseen did it cost her—but she pitied and forgave.

"Dinna mourn that way, my puir lassie," she would say, when she found Helen, as she often did, weeping in secret. "God 'll gie ye strength to bear up wi' your sorrows. He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, Helen, and e'en will He saften the grief in which your young heart is steeped. Though a' the warld should abuse ye, Helen, and desert ye, and scorn ye, your mother's arms and your mother's bosom will aye be open to receive ye; for weel do I ken, though everybody else should be blin' to't, that, for a' that has happened, ye're guileless, Helen, and far mair sinned against than sinning."

The uniform kindness of her mother, and the charitable and Christian-like spirit in which she treated her erring daughter, greatly consoled the unfortunate girl under her affliction, and was the means of saving her, for a time, at any rate, from utter despair—we have said for a time only, because it was ultimately unequal to support poor Helen's spirit against the sneers of an unfeeling world. Returning home one evening from a place at a little distance, where she had been on an errand of her mother's, Helen overheard, from amongst a group of women, some such conversation regarding her as we have already quoted; but more severe things still were said on this occasion than we have recorded, and, amongst these, the last and worst name which can be given to the erring of her sex was applied to her. Helen heard the horrifying word; and no sooner had it reached her ear, than a sense of self-debasement, of shame, and despair, which she had never felt so acutely before,

seized upon her, and nearly deprived her of her reason. The ground seemed to reel under her feet, and it was with the utmost difficulty she was able to make out her mother's house. Her walk was unsteady, and she was pale as death when she entered.

"Mercy on me, Helen! what's the matter?" exclaimed her mother, running, in the utmost alarm, to the bed, on which the latter had flung herself, in an agony of shame and horror, the moment she had entered the house. "What's the matter, Helen?" repeated the latter, in a soothing tone. "Has onybody been using you ill?" she inquired; for she knew that her unfortunate daughter was often exposed to such insult and abuse as we have already noticed.

"O mother! mother! I can stand this nae langer," was the indirect, but sufficiently intelligible, reply of the weeping girl, who, with her face buried in the bedclothes, was now sobbing her heart out. "I can stand it nae langer. I canna live, mother—I canna live under this load o' shame and reproach. I ken I am a guilty and a sinfu creature; but, oh! will they no hae mercy on me, and leave me to the punishment o' my ain thochts and feelings? Is there nae compassion in them, nae pity, nae charity, that they will thus continue to persecute me wi' their merciless tongues? I hae offended my God; but, I'm sure, I hae never offended them in thocht, word, or deed; and why, then, will they drive me to distraction this way? I canna live under it, mother—I canna live under it!" again exclaimed the unfortunate girl.

"They can hae but little o' the milk o' human kindness in their bosoms, Helen, that wad add a pang to them ye are already endurin, my poor lassie," said her mother, leaning over her with the utmost tenderness and affection. "They surely canna be mothers themsels that wad do a thing sae cruel and unfeelin. I'm sure it wad melt the heart o' a whunstane to look on that puir wae-begone face o' yours.

But never mind them, Helen, dear—keep up your heart. Guid has come before noo oot o' evil; and there's nae sayin what may be in store for you yet."

To this attempt at consolation Helen made no reply; but that night—and it was a wild and a wet one—she left her mother's house, stealing out while she slept; and, when morning came, she had not returned, and no one knew whither she had gone. Days, weeks, and months passed away, and still Helen Gardenstone came not, nor was any trace of her discovered; but it came at length to be generally believed that the poor deluded and distracted girl had terminated her miseries by committing suicide—that she had buried her sorrows in the waters of the Molendinar—the name of the stream or river that ran through the village, and which had many deep pools both below and above it.

These were, indeed, actually searched for her body, but to no purpose; though this was accounted for by the circumstance of the river's having been much swollen at the time of Helen's disappearance, by several previous days' rain. The body, then, was conjectured to have been carried down to the sea.

The report of Helen's sudden disappearance, together with rumours of the supposed catastrophe which it involved, soon reached young Wellwood; and, libertine as he was, the appalling intelligence plunged him into the deepest distress. When first informed of it, he grew deadly pale, and would fain have disbelieved the horrid tale, which made him virtually and morally, though not legally, poor Helen's murderer. But, when he found he could no longer doubt the truth of the rumour, remorse and contrition seized him, and, for some days thereafter, he confined himself to his room on pretence of sudden indisposition, to conceal the distraction of his mind, which wholly unfitted him to mingle in society.

The vision of Helen, invested with all the personal beauty and mental innocence in which she had first met his sight, appeared before him during the feverish reveries of the day, and in the disturbed slumbers of the night. Anon, the scene would change, and the dead form of the victim of his lawless passion would stand before him, bearing all the horrid marks of the peculiar death she had died —her face rigid and ghastly pale—her wet dishevelled hair hanging wildly around it; and her clothes drenched with the waters in which her miseries had been terminated. Such were the harrowing pictures which the disturbed imagination and guilty soul of young Wellwood summoned before his mental eye, to madden and distract him. In time, however, these dreadful visions began to abate, both in frequency and force, and he was gradually enabled to take his place again in society; but a settled melancholy was now visible on his countenance—for the fatal catastrophe of poor Helen's death, though latterly less vividly present to him than at first, still pressed upon his spirits with a weight and constancy that produced a very marked change on his general demeanour.

Soon after the period to which we have now brought our story, Wellwood proceeded to the place of his destination abroad, to occupy the official situation which his father's influence had procured for him. Here he remained for two years, when some business connected with the duties of his appointment called him to London. One of the first persons on whom he called, on his arrival in the metropolis, was a gentleman of the name of Middleton—a young man of fortune, and of excessively dissipated habits, whom he had known at Oxford, and who had been the companion of all his debaucheries (and they were frequent and deep) during his residence at that seat of learning. In this last respect young Wellwood was now somewhat improved; but it was otherwise with his old friend, who still pursued, with

unabated vigour and unsated appetite, the wild career of dissipation in which Wellwood had so far accompanied him. The renewal of their acquaintance on this occasion terminated in the renewal of the scenes at Oxford; and, led on by his companion, Harry largely indulged in all the fashionable excesses of the capital. These excesses, however, even with all the outrageous mirth and jollity with which they were associated, could not restore to him the peace of mind he had lost, nor even banish from his countenance that expression of melancholy to which it had now become habituated, and which did not escape his friend Middleton, who frequently urged him to tell him the cause of it; but for some time Wellwood evaded the inquiry. At length, however, the secret was wrung from him.

"I say, now, Harry," said Middleton to him one evening, as they sat together over a bottle of wine, "won't you tell us how you came by that Puritanical face of yours. It's not the one you used to wear at Oxford, I'll be sworn, and where you have picked it up I can't imagine; but it certainly does become you amazingly. That melancholy gives you quite a sentimental air. Couldn't you help me to a touch of it? I think it would improve me vastly."

"Middleton," replied Wellwood, gravely, "I wish you may never have such cause as I have, both to look and to think seriously; and, in order that you may judge for yourself whether I have not good reason, I *will* now inform you of the cause of that melancholy which has so frequently attracted your notice, and has so much excited your curiosity." Having said this, Wellwood proceeded to tell his friend of the dismal story of Helen Gardenstone; and, when he had concluded, "Worlds on worlds," he exclaimed, energetically, "would I give, Middleton, were I possessed of them, to restore that sweet unfortunate girl again to life; and these, ten times told, would I part with, to be relieved of the guilt of having wronged her."

To the melancholy tale of Helen's death, and to the repentant exclamations with which it was wound up, Middleton replied with a loud laugh.

"And is this all?" he cried out. "Is this the cause of that most lachrymose countenance of yours, Harry? Shame, shame, man! I thought you were a fellow of more spirit, a man of more mettle, than to be affected by such a very trifling affair as that. Why, how the deuce could you help the silly wench drowning herself? You did not push her into the water. Tuts, man! fill up your glass, and think no more of it; and now, 'pon my soul, Harry," he continued, "that I know the cause of your dismal phiz, and find it to be a matter of moonshine, I'll cut you for ever, if you don't, after this night, hold up your head, and look like a man. There, fill up," he said, pushing the bottle, from which he had just helped himself largely, towards his companion, who, without making any remark on what had just been addressed to him, seized it with avidity, and, as if in desperation, poured out and swallowed an entire tumbler of the liquor it contained.

We need not follow out the scene. The night terminated, as it usually did with those boon companions, in a deep debauch; but it was ultimately marked by an event for which the reader will be as little prepared as Wellwood was. On returning to his lodgings, accompanied by Middleton, who slept at the same hotel, at an early hour of the morning—and a bitterly cold and snowy one it was, for it was the depth of winter—the two friends, as they came shouting and bawling along, under the influence of the wine they had drunk, were attracted by seeing four or five persons gathered together on the street, and evidently surrounding some object of interest.

"I say, Harry, let's see what this is?" said Middleton; "perhaps we may knock some sport out of it."

"Why, I don't mind," replied the former; "but doubt-

less it's some drunken or starving wretch, enjoying the cool night air."

"Why, what's the matter here?" said Middleton, bustling into the middle of the assemblage, followed by Wellwood.

"Vy, it's a young voman and a child as is a-starving, and has never a home to go to," said one of the bystanders. And such, indeed, was the truth.

A miserable being—not, however, in her attire, which, though bespeaking poverty, was yet clean, whole, and even decent—was seen sitting on the steps of a stair, seemingly in the last stage of exhaustion, with a child, a boy of about two years of age, closely wrapped up in her cloak, and strained to her bosom, to protect it from the piercing cold of the night.

"My good woman," said Middleton, stooping down close to her—for even he was affected by the piteous sight—"where are you from?"

"I'm frae Scotland, sir," was the reply, in a voice of singular sweetness, but evidently enfeebled by suffering.

Wellwood caught in an instant the dialect of his native land; and he did not hear it without emotion—neither were the soft musical tones of the voice lost upon him. They resembled, strongly resembled, those of one whom he dared not even think of; and these circumstances combined, instanty excited in him a deep interest in the unhappy being before him. He now also approached her, and, taking her kindly by the hand, was about to address her in soothing language, looking at the same time closely to her face, when, without saying what he intended, or indeed saying anything, he slowly raised himself again from the stooping posture to which he had had recourse, his face as pale as death, and trembling violently in every limb. In the next instant, he staggered as if he would have fallen. Middleton ran to support him, and, thinking he had been seized with some sudden illness, slowly led him to the distance of

a few paces from the persons assembled round the destitute female.

"What's the matter? what's the matter, Harry?" said the former, on their getting out of hearing of any one. "My troth, but you do look ill, Wellwood!"

"*That*," replied the latter, in a sepulchral voice, and with a look that increased the alarm of his companion—"*that*," he said, pointing to the spot where the unhappy woman sat, and without noticing Middleton's inquiry, "is no being of flesh and blood. It is a vexed spirit, Middleton, come to haunt me for the injuries I did it when in the body—come to destroy my peace, and to realise the horrid dreams of my guilt. It is—it is, Middleton"—and he gasped for breath as he spoke—"the spirit of Helen Gardenstone."

"Nay, that I'll be sworn it isn't," replied his friend, who now thought he had gone deranged. "It's a *bona fide* human being, I warrant you, Harry, and I'll bring you proof of that directly." Saying this, he ran to the object of his friend's terror, and inquired her name. She gave it. Middleton was confounded—he hastened back to Wellwood, and, as he approached him, "By Heaven, Harry!" he said, "you are so far right—the woman's name is really Helen Gardenstone."

Regardless of the situation in which he was, and equally so of those who might witness the strong expression of feeling which he meditated, Wellwood instantly dropped on his knees, and, in one brief sentence of mingled piety and joy, thanked God that he was not altogether the guilty wretch that he had conceived himself to be; for he now felt assured that, whatever might have been the train of circumstances that had led to this singular occurrence, the person whom he had thus found a houseless and destitute wanderer on the streets of the metropolis was, indeed, no other than Helen Gardenstone.

On recovering a little from the tumultuous feelings which

had at first overwhelmed him, Wellwood's next thought was how to succour the unfortunate girl and *his* child, as he had no doubt it was. The first idea which occurred to him on this point was to have Helen instantly conveyed to his hotel—and on this idea he subsequently acted; but, thinking the present neither a fit time nor place to discover himself to her, or to give her an opportunity of recognising him, he deputed the task to his friend Middleton, who readily undertook it, whilst he himself kept aloof. On reaching the inn, Wellwood retired to his own apartment, while Middleton saw to the comforts of his unfortunate charge. These provided for, he rejoined his friend, whom he found wrapped in profound meditation, with his elbow resting on a table.

"Well, Harry," he said, on entering the apartment, "this is a devilish queer affair, an't it? But, in the name of all that's perplexing, what do you propose doing now?"

"I'll tell you all about that in the morning, Middleton," replied Wellwood, gravely, "after I shall have slept on it. In the meantime, I thank you for your attention to the poor girl."

"Faith, to tell you a truth, Harry," rejoined Middleton, "I would have done as much, and a great deal more, too, on her own account, let alone yours; for she's certainly as pretty a girl as ever I clapped eye upon. A gentle, beautiful creature 'tis, Harry. But what the deuce are you to do with her, again say I."

"Why, I have not quite made up my mind on that subject," said Wellwood; "but I'll think of it, and we'll see what the morning brings forth."

Saying this, he retired to his own sleeping-apartment, where he spent half the night in thinking what should be his next proceeding with regard to Helen; and the result of his cogitations on this subject was a resolution of a very extraordinary kind.

On the following morning, when he and Middleton met—

"Well, Harry," said the latter, "what's to be done now? What has been the result of your night's reflections regarding Helen? What do you now propose doing with her?"

"I propose to marry her, Middleton," replied Wellwood, gravely. "It is the least thing I can do in reparation of the injury I have done her—the misery and scorn I have entailed on her; and besides, Middleton," he went on, "I should be perjured in the face of Heaven if I did not, for I swore a sacred and binding oath that I should make her mine; and it was by trusting to that oath that poor Helen fell."

"Ha! ha!—a particular good joke, Harry," exclaimed Middleton; "and ——"

"No joke whatever, Middleton," said Wellwood, interrupting him; "I am in serious earnest. I will do the girl the only justice now in my power. I will do what my heart and my conscience tell me is right in this matter, and defy the sneers of a selfish and censorious world. On this I am firmly determined, let the consequences be what they may. My mind is made up, Middleton."

"You're mad, Harry," said the latter, now becoming serious in his turn, on seeing that his friend was really in earnest—"absolutely and absurdly mad."

"It may be so, Middleton," replied Wellwood, calmly. "That is a point I will not dispute with you; but I am nevertheless firmly resolved to do what I have said. I will take my poor little boy to my bosom, and his mother shall become lady of Wellwood. It is all the reparation I can make her, and it shall be made. Will you assist me in going through with this romantic business, Middleton?" he added, smiling.

"Why, Harry," replied the latter, "I certainly should not like to desert you in a time of need; but ——"

"No buts, Middleton," interrupted his friend. "Will you, or will you not?"

"Why, then, if you *are* resolved, Harry, on this desperate, and, I must call it, singularly absurd step, I will," rejoined Middleton. "But what will your father say to it?"

"Why, from him, certainly, my marriage must, for a time, at any rate, be concealed; but of this more afterwards. In the meantime, will you go to Helen, and tell her that an old acquaintance desires to see her; and conduct her hither?"

Middleton readily undertook the mission, and departed to execute it. In a minute afterwards he returned, leading in Helen by the hand. On seeing Wellwood, she uttered a piercing shriek, and fainted in the arms of Middleton, her little boy clinging to her in all the terror of childish affright. Wellwood rushed to her assistance, and, in the tenderest and most soothing language he could command, endeavoured to restore her to consciousness. This of itself gradually returned, and a scene followed which we will not attempt to describe. Wellwood, pressing Helen to his bosom, told the bewildered but delighted girl that it was his intention to repair the injury he had done her, by offering her his hand. He next flew to his boy, took him up in his arms, bathed him with his tears, and bestowed upon him, while he caressed him, every tender epithet he could think of.

Our story is now coming naturally to a close; and we will not prolong it by any unnecessary or extraneous details. In three days after this, Helen—having been previously provided with everything suitable to the rank in life to which she was thus suddenly and most unexpectedly promoted from the lowest depths of wretchedness and destitution—became the wife of Henry Edington, Esq. of Wellwood. In three days more, Mr Edington received intelligence of his father's sudden demise, which rendered it neces-

sary that he should proceed instantly to Wellwood. In this journey his wife and child accompanied him; and the next appearance of Helen Gardenstone in her native village was in a splendid carriage, as the lady of Wellwood, in which character she subsequently acquired an extensive reputation for benevolence, and for the practice of every social virtue. Helen, in short, became an exemplary wife, and conferred on her husband, who continued to regard her with unabated affection till the day of his death, all the happiness of which the marriage state is capable.

THE SURGEON'S TALES.

THE CASE OF EVIDENCE.

THE following narrative was given to me by the executors of Miss Ballingal, whom I attended for a short time previous to her death:—

I shall not now, I hope, be long upon the face of this earth. It is sinful to wish to die; but, when the spirit is weary of the trials of this evil world, and the body broken, and the bones stricken to their dried marrow with pains, surely a poor mortal may indulge the wish, that God's time of release may not be postponed beyond the power of bearing the weight of life. My years, if mentioned, would not, perhaps, appear to be many; but *age*, in the sense in which I take it, cannot be calculated by circumvolutions of the sun. There is an age of the spirit independently of that of the body; and to calculate that, we must have a measure of the effects of misfortune, and pain, and injury, on nerves toned in all the keys that rise in gradation, from the sensations of creatures a little above the brutes, to the sensibilities of individuals a little lower than the angels. In this view, I am indeed aged as the sons of Levi; for my soul, like the people of Pharaoh, has been smitten with boils and blains, by the poisoned bite of the serpent tongue of civilisation. The spirit of the Indian under his plantain-tree, lives till the body is sick of it; and with a mistaken humanity, he is exposed in the desert, that the wants of the flesh may kill the spirit that yearns to live, and to rejoice again in the return of the seasons, with their fruits and flowers; but the spirit of civilised man or woman is often dead long before the mortal tenement exhibits any decay;

for, though spotted fever and limping palsy have passed on, and touched not the flesh, the spirit has been visited by plagues a thousand times more deadly, that rise from the refinements of civilised life. It is these that have made me aged, and weary of remaining longer here; and I am not doubtful that, when I record what I have suffered from two causes—first, my own—yes, I affirm it—my own goodness; and, secondly, the evils inherent in the state of society in which we live—every one will acknowledge that I have little more to wait for on this side of time, and that the sooner I am dissolved, the better it may be for myself, and those who sympathise in griefs that death alone can alleviate.

Brought up in the manse of C——, by a pious father, the clergyman of the parish, a learned man—and by a mother, a woman of many virtues, who wished her daughter to be as good as herself—I enjoyed all the advantages of breeding and education; which, if turned to good account, make the ornaments of society. I cannot, and never will, admit that these advantages were lost upon me, though they have tended to make me miserable. I was accounted fair; and I believe that my beauty—a gift so much valued—has had also a share, and no inconsiderable one, in the production of the peculiar evils under which I have suffered, and still suffer. I was—what none knew so well as myself—sensitive to a degree bordering on diseased irritability; but my sensitiveness was of that higher kind, which, courting and receiving impressions and impulses from virtuous thoughts and elevated feelings, tends to elevate rather than depress. The fine culture I received from my father, co-operating with my refined sensibilities, produced in me the most exquisitely minute perceptions of moral good and evil; so that I came to have the same delicate feeling of the graceful or the distorted in morals, that some *born* musicians are said to possess in regard to

the tones of harmony in the world of sounds. This is not self-praise—it is truth wrung out of me; for, though possessed of many qualities which might have nourished vanity, the disrelish I ever felt of the exhibitions of a vain spirit in others would have been effectual in quelling my own, even if I had had any to quell, which assuredly I never had. I believe that the strong view in which morals were presented to me by the precepts of my father, would have operated to the production of a fine and healthy effect in one formed for the busy world; but in me, who seemed to have been formed with a connate, aspen-like, trembling sensitiveness of the traces of good and evil, his instructions, continued from day to day, and enforced by the power of his own example and that of my sainted mother, tended to give my original perceptions so strong and holy a sanction, that, at a very early period, I had become a kind of worshipper of good. Virtue has a lovely aspect to all, even to those who tremble at her beauty, from the contrast of their own ugliness; religion has the power of making her more beautiful; and systems of morals, clothed in fine language, are effective in training many hearts to a high love of this emanation from God. But I was, and I am yet, different from any individual whose moral perceptions are merely strengthened by these aids. I do not know if I make myself intelligible, but I myself feel the distinction I wish to impress: morals were to me that species of passion which in many exhibits itself only more perceptibly in regard to some other object—such as poetry, painting, sculpture, or music—with perhaps this difference, that while these natural *illuminati* are merely annoyed by an exhibition of distortion, I was pained—sorely, miserably pained—by vice, in whatever form it was exhibited to me. I was not contented with the ordinary appearances of purity. The jealousy-offering was ever in my hand; and I was always sighing to see it waving before the goddess, and offered upon

the altar of virtue. I looked upon the individual in whom the "water that causes the curse" became bitter, as a creature who was rotten, and had become a curse among the people.

Entertaining these sentiments, I loved to expatiate upon the beauties of my favourite subject, with a glow of eloquence that struck even the godly visiters of the manse with surprise and admiration. I often, also, in my visits among my father's parishioners, exhibited the same warm enthusiasm, couching my sentiments in the gorgeous clothing of a young fancy enamoured of a deified personification of what I conceived to be the only true good and the only true beauty upon earth. But I was no apostle under the influence of a proselytising spirit; for I only visited the virtuous, because I loved them, and those of an evil reputation I avoided with a thrilling horror, as creatures diseased and dangerous to approach. Those who believed me a religious enthusiast—and there were many who entertained that opinion of me—knew nothing of my real nature; for, though my father's precepts had had all due effect upon me, religion, far from being the origin of my feelings, lent merely a sanction to them, showing the final cause of my enthusiastic views, and turning them to that account in the contemplation of an after world, that ought to have been at all times their end and object. I was rather a lover of virtue for its beauty: my feeling was an impassioned taste, luxuriating on every virtuous act, and dwelling with inexpressible delight on every cultivator of my favourite subject. A consequence of this was the horror of vicious persons, which I possessed to a degree that made my father suspect that my passion was not the religious one, which is unavoidably accompanied with pity for the misguided votary of sin, and a straining effort to reclaim him to the paths of virtue. He was to a certain extent right; but I question much if, with all his learning, he possessed knowledge enough of the va-

rious peculiarities of human nature, to enable him to analyse my character, or to understand the peculiarities of one under the dominion of a passion for ethics.

I was, moreover, of a remarkably tender constitution of body—the consequence of early weakness, as well, perhaps, as of that irritable temperament which fed and was nourished in turn by the high-strung sensibilities of my spirit. Up to the age of fifteen, I was subject to a species of fit, or nervous syncope; and I always found that, after an attack of these enervating prostrations of my physical powers, my mind recurred to my favourite subject with greater keenness, supplying my excited fancy with brilliant images of virtuous sacrifices, such as I had read of in the old classic authors, which I could read in the original; and these, again, swelled my heart, lighted my eye, and lent an eloquence to my tongue, which dwelt on the daring of Mutius, the sacrifice of Lucretia, the heroism of Brutus, the friendship of Damon, and the determination of Virginius. Exhausted by the swell of emotions produced by these subjects, I fell back upon the quieter, but no less delicious, theme of a Howard's philanthropy; and ended with the contemplation of those instances of private charity which had come under my own eye. I never felt happier than when in these moods; and my mother, who knew my passion, contributed to its gratification, by directing me to such recorded examples of worth as she knew where to find among my father's books.

Possessed of these views and feelings, so unsuitable to the cold maxims of the world, and with a weak and irritable constitution, I was ill prepared for the loss which was now, when I was in my twentieth year, impending over me—the death of both my parents, who, attacked by the same disease—some putrid species of typhus—died within a week of each other, leaving me, their only child, as much unprovided for in regard to worldly wants, as I

was unfitted for making up the deficiency by my personal exertions. My father left nothing but the furniture in the manse, which was all required to pay up some advances of stipend which had been made to him by several of the heritors, and which the extreme scantiness of his income necessitated him to have recourse to. I was a beggar, imbued with notions to make the people of the world admire and pity, and gifted with a countenance so beautiful (why need I spare the vain word, when I now admit that age and pain have made me ugly?), that, with art, might have realised a fortune, or, with folly, might have ruined me. I sought the protection of a spendthrift uncle and a good aunt—the latter resident in the town of Stirling, an old lady of fortune, a Mrs Greville, who admired my principles, and possessed generosity enough to enable her to offer to repay the pleasures of my companionship by her house and her friendship. My tender frame, operated upon by the intense grief I had felt in the loss of my parents, sustained a shock which would have proved fatal to me, if the assuasive attentions of that angelic being had not contributed to the recovery of my health. Her protection was much, her kindness valuable; but above all was I blessed in the possession of a friend who reduced to practice, though she could not *feel* as I felt, the principles of virtue I had so long cherished with the fondness of a ruling passion. But my situation was now changed. In my father's manse I saw little of the world; but what came under my observation was congenial to my mind, and gratified my feelings by the exhibition of goodness as well of deed as of sentiment. The evil I saw was out-of-doors, and I eschewed it as a serpent which would beguile by the spiral turns of its insidious lines of beauty, and the shining hues of the colours of false loveliness. In our society at home, or in the houses of the parishioners, it never came under my experience, except by the report of crimes which

grated on my irritable feelings, and pained me to a much greater extent than people of ordinary sensibilities may well comprehend. In my new residence, I was necessitated to mix with the world. My aunt saw much company, composed of the mixed inhabitants of the town, and I accompanied her to various parties where the *fashionable* vices were cultivated, as all fashionable things are, with an affected contempt of honest plainness and unadorned simplicity.

Though my aunt was herself a good woman, and admired the high-coloured, and, it may be, unnatural views I took of human life, she never understood the secret parts of my mental constitution, but took me simply for one who entertained a somewhat strong sense of the beauty of a good life, and who therefore could mix with society of acknowledged honesty as the world goes, without allowing the frailty of human nature to interfere with my own views, and far less with my comfort and peace of mind. My beauty made her proud of me; and I was soon introduced to scenes which stirred all the antipathies that, as the result of my past modes of thinking and feeling, lay strong within my heart, and ready to be called forth by a departure in others from the rules of life I had so long loved. The first view I got of the mysteries of card-playing—in the house of Captain Semple, of Tennet, who lived in town, only a few doors removed from where I lived—produced an effect of pain upon me similar to that which Mozart declared he felt when his harmony was lost in discordance. They played for what they called high stakes; and there was exhibited, on a lesser scale, the keen avaricious eye, the forced, choking laugh, the lying smile, the trembling hand, and burning brow of the gambler of the London grade. The whole family engaged in this play. I recollect, at this distant period, the effect produced upon me by the agonised countenance of the beautiful Catherine Semple, the eldest

daughter, when she lost a high stake, and yet turned the expression of the worst look of the devil into a smile far more hideous than that which it concealed. Nor was the effect less painful that was produced upon my high-wrought sensibilities by the cruel triumph that burned in the beautiful blue eye of Esther her sister, who had pocketed the hard-won earnings of a poor surgeon, and seemed to feed on the poisoned garbage of his depression and disappointment. The face of her mother, who looked on, partook alternately of the expression of those of her daughters; and while I, a stranger, beheld with pain the first principles of goodness subverted, and the fairest samples of God's creatures penetrated to the core by the worst feelings of our fallen nature, she, their parent, sympathised with a daughter's deceit and revenge, or gloried in her triumph over what might be the approaches of ruin to a fallen creature. I went home after that exhibition dispirited and miserable; the chords of the moral harp, that had so long responded to the sweet sounds of a virtue imagined, felt, and dreamed of, as a beatific vision, were disrupted and torn asunder; and I imagined that the individuals who had thus laid upon it their sacrilegious hands were worthy of a hatred unqualified by pity, as destroyers of the most beautiful fabric ever erected by God's love. These were not the gloomy views of the monastic ascetic, or the religious enthusiast—for I was neither. I was, indeed, peculiarly formed; but I knew not my peculiarity, and even now I could scarcely abate one ray of the effulgence that, if you please, blinded me to the factitious virtues of the *juste milieu* of a bad world's morality.

Some nights afterwards, I accompanied my aunt to the house of Mrs Ball, also a neighbour, and one who could afford to live in a style that, in such a town as Stirling, might be conceived to be high. She had a daughter, Anne, and a son, George, an attorney, both accomplished and handsome, and wearing on their faces the external appear-

ances of simplicity and goodness. The recollections of Semple's family were still busy with my heart, and I trembled to approach another assemblage of fashionable people. I was placed in the midst of a large tea *coterie*, and expected to hear a conversation suited to the views of human life I so fondly cherished. Stories of generosity, of age assuaged, bereavement ameliorated, want supplied, and hunger and nakedness fed and clothed, must, I thought, issue from such a quiet-looking assemblage of people, brought together apparently for no other purpose than to promote the cause of their own happiness, which surely might be best done by contemplating the means of the happiness of others. Having had one of my fits in the fore part of the day, I was more irritable than usual; but having got, in some measure, quit of the pain produced by the moral discordance that had, some days before, grated so painfully on my weak nerves, I expected to be able to join in a conversation which could not fail to embrace a part of my favourite theme. I was again destined to be made miserable. I was placed in the midst of a species of moral cannibals, who preyed ruthlessly and jestingly on the misfortunes and miseries of their fellow-creatures. Pecuniary embarrassments, matrimonial disagreements, detections of dishonesty, elopements, infidelities—everything that might render an individual worthy of pity or hatred—was treated in the same tone of concealed satisfaction. The burst of loud laughter followed on the heels of the whine of hollow sympathy; the sneer mixed its cutting sarcasm with the lying tribute to suffering worth; and through all, over all, in all, there was the spirit of evil, in its worst, its ugliest form, rejoicing—secretly, no doubt, but not the less certainly—in the defection of mortals from God's law, and their devarication from my standard of moral beauty.

I experience a difficulty now, though then it would have been easy for me to describe what I felt on the occasion of

this new display of this, to me, the ugliest parts of the hated system of evil which prevails in the world. The beautiful visions I had formed in my day-dreams, and which I had cherished as the source of my greatest happiness, appeared to me to have little or no relation to earth, or to earth's inhabitants; and a gloomy melancholy stole over me, and retained the dominion of my mind, in spite of every effort to shake it off. I endeavoured to make my feelings understood by Mrs Greville; but she, though participant in my views of moral perfection, could not comprehend why the turpitude of men should have the effect of making a good person incapable of enjoying what was truly virtuous in nature, and far less why it should produce a gloomy misery in those who were themselves truly good. What people cannot comprehend, they sometimes state to others, for the sake of assistance to their understandings; and my aunt, in the openness of her heart, stated my peculiarities to some friends, who coloured them to suit their fancies, and then communicated them to the families of the Semples, the Balls, and several others. My views, as I afterwards learned, were considered by these people as an impeachment of their morals; and I was set down as an arch-hypocrite, who wished to rear a character for goodness on the ruin of the reputation of others. The state of despondency into which I fell, precipitated me into a succession of my old nervous fits, and it was not for some time that I was again prevailed upon to visit the scenes where my feelings were exposed to such causes of laceration; but when I did again accompany my friend in her accustomed visits, I found that I had become unwelcome: oblique sneers, short, cutting taunts, and pointed insinuations, were directed against me; and though I then knew nothing of the cause, I felt, with that trembling sensitiveness which was peculiar to me, the poignancy of the poison of a hatred that was scarcely attempted to be concealed.

In the little intercourse I had as yet had with the new world of sad reality into which I had entered, I had heard the characters of good people so fearfully belied and reviled, that I attributed the painful treatment I thus received to the same malevolent spirit that dictated the malicious scandal which seemed to penetrate almost every family I had yet visited. I inquired for no cause in myself; for I had done or said nothing to create merited individual hatred. It was the working of the same spirit of evil that generally prevailed, extended to me, a poor orphan, living on the dependence of a kind relation. It was one thing to see evil done towards others, and to feel it applied to one's-self; and the pain I formerly felt was increased by the dread that I might yet be thrown upon that world which presented to me such fearful indications of cruelty and vice. It will soon be seen whether it was my good or evil fortune, at this gloomy period, to meet with one who appeared really to understand the constitution of my mind, to appreciate the exalted views I entertained of virtue, and to sympathise with me in the pain produced by the discordance between the actual state of society and what I so fondly wished it to be. Augustus Merling, proprietor of a fine property called the Park, yielding him about £1500 a-year, and who lived, for a great part of the year, in town with his widowed mother, visited my aunt, and often saw me. I have said I was possessed of much beauty, and the fact is undoubted; but there was still about me that aspen-like sensitiveness, derived from the nervous attacks to which I was enslaved, operating on a mind of originally fine structure, that the very look of man or woman, if boldly thrown upon me, whether from curiosity or confidence, made me shrink intuitively, and look confused or abashed; and I never could conceive that all the beauty I possessed could make amends for or overcome the prejudices against me originating in that cause. I was in this respect, however, entirely wrong.

My sensitiveness gave me an interest in the eyes of Augustus, who, the moment he saw me, was so struck with the beauty of my face, and that very shrinking of my manner, that he inquired at Mrs Greville every particular concerning me; and got such an account as, he himself afterwards confessed, increased his curiosity by the mystic obscurity in which my aunt's inability to understand me had wrapped all the peculiar attributes of my mind. He had felt some anticipative impression of a sympathy between our thoughts and feelings; and our intercourse—for he sought me the more fervently the more I retired from him—soon satisfied him he was right in his estimate of my character. I am certain he understood me thoroughly, and I believe he was the only individual I had yet met who fathomed the mysteries of a heart only too good and pure for the world in which we live. But, if I was surprised and pleased with this, what may be conceived to be my feelings, when I at last found, in a beautiful youth of fortune, the very moral counterpart of myself, with all my exalted views of my beloved and cherished goodness and moral loveliness! Often as the pen of poet has been employed in the description of the feelings of mortals under the influence of the tender passion, sublimed by the elevating power of virtuous purity, I am satisfied that small approach has been made to the reality of the love that soon bound me and Augustus together as creatures made after the same model, and yet different from all mankind. If other matters did not hurry me forward, I could exhibit the thrilling details of a bliss which is thought to be peculiar to the regions above. I would only be afraid that the analysis would require to be carried so deep into the attenuated fibres of constitutions so seldom seen and so little understood, that I would be charged with my imputed error of applying unearthly visions to things of earthly mould. Love has become a by-word, because it is too often mixed

with the impurities of vulgar natures; but such love as ours might tend to elevate and throw over the rapt fancies of imaginative beings a forecast of that exquisite bliss which awaits mankind in the regions of heaven.

But, even in this sweet dream, the evil of the world was destined to follow me. I had taken from two ladies the object of their love or ambition. Catherine Semple and Anne Ball, whom I have already mentioned, had been severally intended by their mothers as the wife of Augustus—a match to which the young rivals themselves were as much inclined as their mothers, as well from the personal qualities of Augustus, as from his wealth and property. I was hated by these ladies before as a hypocrite. I was now the successful rival apparently destined to blast all the cherished hopes of their love or ambition—and yet guiltless of even the thought of the earthly and debased feelings of what is known as rivalship. Our love was soon known to both the families, chiefly through the medium of George Ball, who acted as the man of business of Mrs Greville, and in that capacity was often a visiter at the house. The effect of the intelligence was intense and stirring; and, through the simple medium of my aunt, I heard myself denounced as one who carried virtue on my face and tongue; simulated nervous sensibility, to give effect to my affected distaste of vice; and who yet bore within my bosom, for a heart, the poisonous cockatrice, whose eggs were the guile and deceit that work more evil in the world than open-faced, unblushing vice. These statements were corroborated by what I myself saw; for when I again met the young ladies—and it was more by chance than intention—I was struck by the intensity with which they, even in the presence of others, expressed by look and manner the hatred they carried in their hearts against me, guiltless as I was of thought or deed inimical to them or any other mortal on earth. The enmity thus flared upon me, with such

strength of feeling, was experienced in the height of the delicious dream of love in which I was entranced; and, softened and mellowed as I was with the sweet enjoyment of the actual experience in Augustus of the visions of perfection I had so devotedly cherished, I felt again, and in an increased degree, the pain which the workings of evil seemed fated to produce in me.

About the same time, another source of uneasiness rose at my side, in the person of George Ball. Whether actuated by love, or interest, or both, I know not—but I afterwards had reason to suppose he wished Augustus detached from me, to be free for his sister—this individual took the opportunity of my aunt's absence, and made, on his knees, warm professions of attachment to me. He declared that he was dying for me, and implored me to give him a test of his affection. I looked at him and trembled. He it was who had reported the affection of me and Augustus, and, with the knowledge that I loved and was beloved by another, he thus attempted to burst the bonds of a holy and elevated connection—to make me ungrateful, perfidious, and base; and to render him in whom all my happiness was centred miserable and wretched. My frame of mind was too delicate for indignation; a slow creeping feeling of loathing was the form in which the contemplation of evil produced an effect on me, and the sickening influence seldom failed in reducing me, for a time, to gloom and nervousness. I cannot describe my conduct on the occasion of this new discovery of the workings of the prevailing demon; but I believe that I hurried from the apartment with such an expression of my feelings depicted upon my countenance, as must have told him, more eloquently than words, the disgust he had roused in me, and the pain with which I was penetrated. The former he might understand, the latter was beyond the reach of his intelligence.

I found an assuagement of these evils in the bosom of

Augustus, where lay the microcosm, that pure moral world I delighted to contemplate; but the illness of Mrs Greville, which shortly after supervened, called upon me to exercise actively those virtues of gratitude and kindness which formed a part of the scheme of my morality. Night and day I waited upon my benefactress, with the fondness of affection, and the fidelity and unwearied steadfastness of principle. Between her and my Augustus my time was passed; and I know not whether I felt more satisfaction in the theoretical contemplation I enjoyed along with him, of the beauties of a good life, than in the practical application of our views to the ameliorarion of my aunt's feelings in her illness, and to the contribution to her ease and satisfaction. Yet all my assiduity seemed to be of little avail; she gradually grew worse; and there seemed to come over her, at times, sorrowful anticipations of what might befall me, in the event of her death, mixed with, if not suggested by, recollections of the manner in which I had been treated by the families whose daughters aspired to the hand of Augustus. These thoughts were busy with her one day, and she had sent for George Ball to make her will. Before he came, she was visited by the mother of Augustus; and before the latter departed, Miss Catherine Semple and Miss Anne Ball also came. I sat by her bedside, watching, through tears of sympathy, every indication of pain or solicitude. It was a strange meeting, and presented an opportunity for a declaration of sentiment on the part of my aunt, that, ill as she was, she could not let escape.

"Martha," she said, looking in my face, and taking my hand into hers, "oh, that I possessed the virtues of your clear, untainted mind!—for then I should be prepared to meet the bright beams of that light of heavenly glory which searches to purify, and shines to enlighten, and bless, and make happy. Your trial may be now, or rather when I am gone; but your triumph will come when you are as I now

am. People have tried to injure you" (she looked steadfastly at the two young ladies); "but, if Mrs Merling remains your friend, the viper-tongue of scandal or reproach cannot touch you. The terms on which you stand with Augustus I know, though I never can be able to comprehend all the beauty of your mutual views and sentiments on that subject which is gradually opening upon me by the medium of a light from above. You have rivals" (looking again at the two young ladies); "but they are bold mortals who would dispute the victory with angels."

These words came to me like the "fountain which was opened to the house of David," for it banished from me many fears; but to Catherine Semple and Anne Ball they were as adders' tongues; and the eliminated poison, indigested, was thrown out upon me by every expression of hatred they could call up into their countenances. Mrs Merling was silent, but looked upon me with that sweetness which resulted from those angelic views of heaven-born goodness she had communicated to Augustus. That look was to me an ample panoply against the scorching, revengeful fire of the eyes of my rivals, who, having expended all the force of their malevolence by the side of their prostrate and apparently dying friend, departed in wrath. In a short time, a servant came from George Ball, and stated that he was from home, and would not return till next day. My aunt appeared disconcerted by the intelligence, but said she would not employ another, as he alone knew the state of her affairs. Mrs Merling kissed me, and told me to be of good heart, for that, while she loved her Augustus, she must continue to love me, who was his counterpart, and therefore (she added, with a soft smile) more of heaven than of earth. She departed, stating that she would return in the evening, to ascertain how my aunt then was. These assurances of friendship I required to sustain me amidst this trying scene; for my old complaint had been exhibiting an activity among my

nerves, which shook me to the heart, and predisposed me for the pain of the endurance of enmity on the one side, and the solicitude of a friendship, on the eve of being ended for ever, on the other. I was sitting convulsed by conflicting emotions, with my hand on my forehead, when Mrs Greville again spoke.

"I feel worse, my beloved Martha," she said, "and am solicitous about the return of George Ball. I would send for another, but that I would so much prefer my usual man of business. So far, at least, I can insure your safety, my love, in the event of anything happening to me before his return. Hand me that box that lies on the top of my escritoire."

I complied, by fetching and laying the box on the bed. My aunt took a key that lay under her pillow, and, opening the secretary, exhibited a great number of jewels, which she had got on the death of her husband, who had been a jeweller on a great extent in London, and left her the treasure as her share of his fortune. Some of these she had disposed of, and laid out the proceeds in the purchase of heritable property, on the rents of which she lived; and the remainder, along with an inventory, written in her own hand, she had deposited in the box, of which she had always taken the greatest care. There were other valuable articles besides the jewels in the box; her title-deeds were there, and some bank-cheques, for money she had saved out of her rents. She lifted up two or three pearl-necklaces, and other articles, to enable her to get to a string of diamonds, apparently of great value.

"These," she said, "were valued by James" (so she always spoke of her husband) "at four thousand pounds. They were intended as the portion of my little Agnes, who died only one week before her father. Who has a better right to them than you, my dear Martha?—take them, and along with them the necklaces, which I think are worth a hundred

guineas each. The loose jewels in this interior box you may also take; they are of no great value, but they will suit you as articles of dress, when you become the wife of Augustus Merling. Take and place them all in your own trunk. If I get better, I will trust to your returning them to me *without a request on my part*, and the inventory may be left here, to show what you have got. When George Ball comes, I shall make him put a clause in my will, to accord with this act and my sentiments."

She then locked the box, and I, with tears of gratitude in my eyes, went and placed the jewels in my trunk, and returned to the bed of my benefactress.

"You must look to your treasure, Martha," she continued. "I have guarded it well, having had occasion to doubt the honesty of Magdalene" (the maid-servant), "who, I fear, knew too well what that box contained. I missed a beautiful brooch last year, and would have discharged her, but that I had no evidence against her. Look well to the key of your trunk."

I could not reply to these statements of my aunt. My heart was full, and my tongue would not express the feelings of gratitude with which I was penetrated; but she understood me, and was content. Shortly afterwards, she said she felt worse, and I despatched Magdalene for Mrs Merling, who came within half-an-hour, accompanied by Augustus, who sat in an antechamber, anxious to see me. The first look that Mrs Merling directed to her old friend detected the symptoms of approaching death, and she communicated to me secretly the melancholy information. She seemed anxious about the attorney; but the situation in which I, who would be benefited by the will, and her son, who was so near, stood in relation to each other, produced a delicacy which prevented her from showing any anxiety on the subject. The medical man, who came soon after, held out to us a very faint hope, and even hinted that he

himself was surprised at the sudden change that had taken place upon her. The unfavourable symptoms increased towards night, and the intelligence of her illness brought Mrs Ball, to get her curiosity satisfied, and her feelings of humanity excited. She had been informed by her daughter of what had taken place in the forenoon, and had scarcely entered, when she alluded, in a sneering tone, to Augustus, whom she had seen in the anteroom as she passed. We sat round the bed of my dear relative, who began to exhibit symptoms of a wandering state of mind—a circumstance less noticed by the others than by me; and having heard that Augustus was in the house, she requested to see him. I ran for him—he came and bent himself over the sick-bed, to administer some of the soothing sentiments of a mind replete with the balm of "the spirit of grace and supplications" which was poured on the house of David. She asked him to be seated, and, raising a little her body, she pointed to the box, which stood on the top of the escritoire, and wished it brought to her, that she might give Augustus a ring as a keepsake. Mrs Merling, who sat next to it, obeyed the request, and brought the box. With trembling hands the patient sought for the key, and having found it, tried to insert it in the lock; but she was unable, and Mrs Merling assisted her. The box was opened, and my aunt, now in a state of delirium, ran a wild eye over its contents, and, raising her hands to heaven, cried—

"Where are my jewels? I have been robbed. Wretches, tell me where are those jewels which I have guarded for twenty years?"

The excitement was fatal—she fell back, and expired. The confusion which followed this sudden and as yet unexpected event drowned for a time the effect resulting from the extraordinary exclamation. The women were busy in various ways, and Augustus ran to support me, who at

first, staggered by the exclamations, was rendered senseless by what so immediately followed. I swooned in his arms, and, when I recovered, found myself in my own parlour, with Mrs Ball leaning over me. Augustus, alarmed by the length of time I remained insensible, had hastened away for the doctor, and left me to the tender mercies of the mother of my rival. When I looked up, the first object that met my eyes was my trunk, where were deposited the jewels I had got gifted to me by my aunt; and, by the power of association, I heard ringing in my ears the words, "I have been robbed." The air seemed thick, from the impediment which my swelling heart offered to my powers of respiration, and, holding out my hand, I pushed away her who held me. The resistance offered to my hands directed my attention to the face of Mrs Ball, who, smiling, with a cutting satire, which spoke her suspicions—

"Who robbed your aunt, Miss Martha?" inquired she. "Why did you faint when she mentioned the loss of her jewels?"

"Ha!" answered I, with an exclamation, rubbing my forehead, and still searching in my mind for a full recollection of all that had taken place; "I wish my aunt to explain, in presence of Mrs Merling, and you, and Augustus, her extraordinary words. Come, come—let us go to her—she must explain, she must free me of the imputation."

"Your aunt is dead, young woman; you saw her die," she replied, with more bitter irony. "You have not yet recovered yourself. It was her death-bed confession. Why did it shake you so? *You* never can be suspected."

In an instant the full truth flashed upon me, and I saw that the death of my aunt precluded all hope of getting her statement recalled. I felt a horrible load upon my heart, and gasped for breath. The thought that I had *already* allowed to pass the proper opportunity of stating the truth burned my brain with the pain of a seething

iron. The force of truth was strong in me, and I struggled at this late period to tell all that had occurred; but, when I looked up in the face of my malicious tormentor, I could not speak, and I now felt that those sensibilities which made me so exquisitely alive to the sense of virtue had become my enemies. The thought of being suspected—and my confession that the jewels were in my trunk would amount almost to a conviction—seemed worse than death in its direst form; yet I essayed again and again to tell the truth, and still I failed to pronounce one intelligible word of explanation. Mrs Ball, finding me recovered, left me, as she said, with her accustomed satire, to the attentions of Augustus Merling, who at that moment entered the room with the surgeon. He was delighted to see me recovered, and asked me, in tones that sounded in my ears more grating than risped iron, how I felt. I answered, with difficulty, that I was better. The doctor gave me some stimulant, and he and Augustus sat down by my side, talking on the subject of the sudden change that had taken place in my aunt's disease, which no one had thought fatal. I sat silent, and expected every moment that Augustus would have mentioned something regarding the statement made by my aunt in reference to her jewels; but he never approached the subject — a circumstance which seemed to me extraordinary; for it was impossible, I thought, that so striking an incident could have escaped his memory; and as the presence of the doctor could form no reason (but rather the opposite) against a recurrence to the subject in his presence, I thought I had grounds for supposing that my presence formed the cause. The moment this thought entered my mind, I shook throughout my whole system. The question rose incessantly upon me, Why does my presence prevent him from disclosing so startling and important a circumstance? The answer appeared plain and simple—Because he suspects me. At the

time these thoughts were passing through my mind, my eye caught again my trunk, and I now saw very plainly, from the position of the key, which, having been handled carelessly, was hanging from the keyhole, that some one had been there. I recollected that, when my aunt grew worse, I ran to her, and left the key in the lock, and now suspected that Mrs Ball had opened it while I was in a state of insensibility. As I fixed my eye on the trunk, I heard Augustus stop in the middle of a sentence; and, turning upon him a timid, furtive glance, I thought I saw him look at me earnestly, with a different expression of countenance from any I had ever yet seen him assume. The doctor seemed to notice the break in the conversation, and to take it as a hint to retire, which he did almost immediately, to the great increase of my misery. I was now left alone with Augustus, and my whole mind became, as it were, concentrated in my ear, to hear him break the subject which had become so awfully interesting to me. I was silent, and he, too, apparently, was inclined to be gloomy—a state of mind so inconsistent with the usual habitudes of a spirit ever in the contemplation of the fair side of human nature, that I looked upon it as inauspicious. I had forgotten entirely—so completely was my mind absorbed by the frightful subject before me—that he might respect the sorrow incident to my situation, and hold it too sacred for an abrupt and officious condolence. At length the soft accents of sympathy stole from his lips; and had they been as "the ointment of spikenard," they would have aggravated my pain; for he avoided—it appeared to me studiously—all reference to the conduct of my aunt. I knew not what words to use in my inane replies; and the more studiously he seemed to avoid the subject, the more difficult, the more certainly impossible, I felt the task of approaching it myself. I felt now, more heavily than when in the presence of Mrs Ball, the weight of the *time* that had

already been allowed to elapse without an explanation; and every minute that passed added to it immeasurably. My aunt's statement, standing alone, was powerful, almost insuperable; but, joined to the lapse of time between the charge and the denial—for what could it be now but a denial?—it would appear to be proof strong as holy writ. All this I felt with such soul-prostrating effect, that every effort I made to broach the subject was strangled in my throat, by the sympathetic power of a heart loaded with the shame of a suspicion that *never* could be disproved. In addition to all this, what I had already suffered had produced indications of a coming accession of my nervous affections; and thus overcome by shame, terror, and physical debility, I sat beside my comforter as one in whose ears are knelling the strokes of the hour of execution.

Augustus rose to depart; and, at this moment, his mother, who had been occupied dressing the dead body, came in to ascertain how I was. She looked wistfully at me as I sat pale and trembling, and I thought I saw her motion to Augustus to leave us together. He went out, and shortly after, my fit came upon me, and retained me in its ruthless grasp for a considerable period. I never had recovered from an attack to a perception of such realities as were now before me; and the more conscious I became, the more dreadful seemed my condition. My first thoughts were directed to the speech of Mrs Merling; and I soon found that she too avoided making the slightest allusion to my aunt's death-bed declaration. If the circumstance was strange in Augustus, it was more so in his mother, a female, not so apt to be forgetful of a matter where curiosity might have been expected to be roused to the highest pitch. I was now more and more convinced that both acted from a sense of delicacy towards me, on whom the whole weight of the suspicion of my aunt's declaration doubtless rested. I felt the same load on my breast as before—the same difficulty to approach the fear-

ful subject; but now my energies were overcome by another cause, for the moment I began to struggle with myself, with a view to overcome the choking impediment presented to a declaration, I was attacked by my nervous ailment, and laid senseless in the arms of my friend. This occurred several times within an hour, at the end of which period—with the fatal secret still in my bosom—I was so overcome with misery and pain, that I was obliged to be consigned to my night-couch.

I lay for several days in a state of weakness, which was continued by occasional attacks of my complaint, by the weight of the peculiar misery with which I was affected, and, by the disturbing effects of horrid dreams, the consequence of the states of both my mind and body. These last assumed often the character of nightmare, in which the form of my aunt was always (though dreadfully distorted) apparent among others; but, dreadful as these were, I would have borne all their weight, and endured all their agony, rather than have suffered what always awaited me when I succeeded in wrenching my consciousness out of the grasp of the nocturnal fiend. Mrs Merling attended me, and Augustus was incessant in his requests to know how I was. My aunt was, in the meantime, buried; and Mrs Merling, who communicated to me the intelligence, seated herself by my bedside, with the view, apparently, of opening to me some subject that lay near her heart. I looked at her and trembled.

"Martha," said she, "I am going to speak to you on a subject of great delicacy; and it is because I know you are possessed of as much good sense as generous feeling, that I will take the liberty of doing it after the manner of a friend."

She paused, and looked at me, as if her heart had been overpowered with pity. I expected now the long-dreaded announcement, and lay motionless, almost senseless, to hear the pronunciation of my doom.

"Your aunt was no sooner laid under the ground," began Mrs Merling, "than her heir-at-law—who is, as you know, your uncle by the mother's side, James Battie, one of the worst men that our part of the country has ever seen—came and demanded possession of the house, with the articles therein; to all which, and indeed to everything which belonged to the good old lady, he has an undoubted right, seeing that she left no will. The keys are accordingly to be delivered this evening to his agent, who, by the by, is Mr George Ball, and who has likely been selected in consequence of his having acted in that capacity for your aunt, and therefore acquainted with her concerns. Every lock and drawer in the other parts of the house was sealed up before the funeral; and it was only on the representation that you were lying here in a state of distress, that this room has not been entered. It is therefore necessary that you remove from this house this evening; and as I and my son know you have no home, no friends, and, I fear, no means, we have resolved to take from you no denial to our request that you permit yourself to be removed to our house, where, allow me to say, my dear Martha, I hope to see you in the character of a respected and beloved daughter-in-law."

This announcement satisfied me that neither Mrs Merling nor her son had any suspicions of my being possessed of my aunt's jewels; and, so far as regarded these individuals, I had no reason for the apprehensions that had assailed me; but alas! how long could they remain in that state of mind, when, as it had appeared, Mrs Ball's son was appointed the attorney of the heir-at-law? That fact appeared decisive of my ruin. I could not contemplate the probable evils that might result from it, without exposing myself to the danger of another fit of my ailment; and making an effort to reply suitably to Mrs Merling, I, with great difficulty, rose and got myself dressed, and removed

with my trunks to the residence of my new benefactress, where I might have enjoyed all the happiness of which my nature was capable of, had I not taken with me the burden that still pressed upon my heart. Augustus seemed to realise some fond dream in having me under his mother's roof as his intended wife. He renewed our former studies and conversations; wooed my heart, in many forms, and with numerous allurements, to the calm, virtuous enjoyments of love; and seemed to make a total sacrifice of himself, his pursuits and feelings, to the reclamation of me to my wonted participation in his sentiments, and sympathy with his high-souled aspirations. These benefits, this worship, that offer of happiness, only tended to render me from hour to hour more incapable to unburden to him my mind. The burden pressed upon me with the weight and horror of an incubus. I forced myself repeatedly from the presence of him I loved above all earthly things, and wept in my closet over a fate which held before my eyes a fair heaven, imparted the capabilities of enjoying it, and the burning wish to reach it—and yet guarded it with a demon whose visage was the chosen birthplace of terror. My struggles to impart the intelligence had become weaker and weaker, as the lapse of time rendered any declaration I could make less and less worthy of credit. If I had had the feeling of guilt, I would have naturally taken means, by removing the articles, to avoid detection; but, filled though I was with the forebodings of ruin and shame, none of the ordinary means of avoiding my fate ever occurred to me; and, though they had, my mind, filled with pure and elevated sentiments, would have shrank aghast at the devices of guilt.

What I had already suffered produced such an effect upon me, that I was reduced to the condition of a sickly, lingering creature, destitute of the sustaining power that enables the most wretched of mortals to support their existence, and continue on this stage of crime and misery. Even my

cherished views of the grace and beauty of my favourite ethics ceased to yield me any pleasure; all my thoughts, hopes, and feelings were absorbed by the one great and ever-present conviction, that I was liable to be suspected—nay, proved—a robber; and every ring of the door-bell sounded in my ears as the prelude to my ruin. My condition was soon noticed by the solicitude of my benefactors, who, by inviting company to the house, endeavoured to drive away what they termed my sorrow for my aunt. Mrs Ball and Anne Ball were of these parties. They looked at me as if they enjoyed some signal triumph; and though, by crouching into the corner of the room, I tried to avoid them, they seemed to take a delight in following me, and contrasting the hilarity of their joy with the gloom of my melancholy. Shall I ever forget the looks of these women? When shall their words fade from my ear? Anne Ball put a question to me—Why did I not wear my aunt's diamond necklace? I swooned, and was carried out. What a night was that!

In the morning I forced myself to the breakfast table, though I could scarcely walk that length. Augustus had, for several hours, been studying some portions of Plato, where that philosopher, as he said, arrays, in the most beautiful language of any nation on earth, the most exalted ideas of man's capabilities in the great field of heaven-directed virtue that ever fired the brain of the philosophic philanthropist. Ill as I was, I listened to his description of what he had read; but every word was a dagger whose hilt was set with rubies, whose point sought my heart. The thrilling and swelling emotions which would, at one time, have obeyed the sounds of his voice, attuned to such music of moral spheres, seemed to fall back upon my heart and suffocate me. The bell of the outer door now rang with considerable vehemence, and I heard the steps of several individuals enter. I thought I heard my own name men-

tioned, and shortly the step of one person, the others apparently remaining below, was heard upon the stair. The parlour-door opened, and George Ball, holding in his hand a paper, stood before us. He bowed to Augustus and his mother; but to me he threw only the glance of a cunning, triumphant eye. My heart was still; every muscle, voluntary and involuntary, seemed bound up in the grasp of a spasm; and freezing fear, in place of breath, when my lungs played not, sustained me as a statue is sustained. George Ball spoke—

"I trouble your family this morning, Mr Merling, on a matter of business. I hold in my hand a warrant of the sheriff to search the repositories of Miss Martha Ballingal, resident in your house, for certain jewels of great value, which belonged to Mrs Greville, her aunt, and an inventory of which was found in the empty box where the articles were deposited. Mrs Greville, as you and your mother both know, declared on her death-bed that she had been robbed of these jewels; there was another witness who heard the same declaration; and the empty box, with the inventory, corroborated the statement of Mrs Greville, who, indeed, could not have been wrong in a matter which so nearly concerned herself. Now, the heir-at-law has good reason to suppose that these jewels, and particularly a diamond necklace, several pearl ones, and a number of loose jewels, all as set forth in the inventory, are in the trunks of Miss Ballingal; and the sheriff has accordingly granted a warrant for the purpose of having her repositories examined. I have stated these things to you at once, because the lady is under your protection, and I would not have conceived it fair to search lockfast places in your house, without first making this intimation to you personally."

Augustus looked at George Ball for some moments without speaking. He had been taken by surprise, and

the communication had roused in him such a conflict of feelings, that he was entirely unmanned. A short time brought him to the power of a reply. Mrs Merling sat as one entranced. I was still able to maintain my position, but was ready to fall at a single turn of this extraordinary ceremony.

"We were aware, sir," replied Augustus, "that Mrs Greville had lost or been robbed of her jewels, because we heard her declare so; but, in duty to the feelings of Miss Ballingal, who is beyond suspicion, we have refrained from alluding to the subject, until some light should be thrown upon the manner in which the articles were carried off. The repositories of the maid should have been searched. As to Miss Ballingal, that lady, I will take upon me to say, will cheerfully lay hers open to your inspection."

I heard no more that I could understand. A confused sound of men's voices, and of their feet passing and repassing, fell on my ear, and stifled screams of a female mixed at times with them, and died away into hollow moans. I do not know what time elapsed; but I found myself in my own apartment alone. I tried to lift myself up and look around. My trunks were open; the place where the jewels had been was ransacked; the jewels themselves were gone. I went to the door, and tried to open it; but it was locked, and the rough voice of a man answered by requesting me to remain quiet. It was not the voice of Augustus or of George Ball. I had never heard it before. Presently the door was opened with a loud noise, and three men entered. They threw a shawl over me, and placed on my head my bonnet, which was lying near me; for they said that I was unable to do these offices for myself. They took hold of my arms, and proceeded to direct me outwards. I passed through the room where we had been breakfasting. Mrs Merling sat

in one corner, with a handkerchief over her face, and loud sobs burst from her. Augustus had buried his face in his hands, and I heard heavy groans forcing themselves from his convulsed bosom, in spite of all his efforts to restrain them. They never looked at me. A feeble cry of "Augustus!" came involuntarily from me as I was hurried forward, and I could see his hand waving as if he disowned me in sorrow. In a few minutes more, I was lodged in a prison.

The cell to which I was consigned was dark and loathsome, as all Scotch jails then were, and as many of them still are. A small grating looked out into a yard, where sick debtors were allowed space to walk. A small stream of light came in at this aperture, and exhibited to me all the horrors of my place of confinement—the pallet of straw, a broken chair, and fragments of iron chains, which had been used for the purpose of binding felons. I cannot describe what I felt, as my eye glanced, in the dim light of the cell, over these articles; yet they added nothing to my pain. I may even say with truth, that they had rather the power of diminishing it—the lowest condition of despair sometimes drawing from an additional evil a species of frozen insensibility, which is felt as a relief. For two or three days I scarcely moved; my meat lay by the side of my pallet, and I saw crowds of hungry rats come and eat of it—fighting with each other over the vessel, and turning, at times, and looking at me, apparently without terror. The sight of these creatures at one time would have made me fly and scream, from an involuntary fear of them, to which I had all my life been subject; but I now sat and looked at them with apathy, though they approached so near to me that I could have seized them with my extended hand. This fit of inanity gradually wore off; but it was succeeded by a condition a thousand times more fearful; for as if the restrained blood had obeyed some impulse of

reacting nature, my veins began to beat violently, my temples throbbed, and the thoughts that had been frozen or fixed in one gloomy direction began to career violently—touching all subjects in their progress; retracing every painful circumstance of my lot; contrasting my former happiness with my present misery; foreshadowing my trial, my condemnation, my execution or banishment; and then, again, mixing up a thousand images, leaving me in a state of wild confusion, incapable of distinguishing one thing from another. This was the beginning of a fever. I was insensible for many days—had been bled and blistered—despaired of—and recovered from the brink of death, to meet a fate a thousand times more dreadful. My trial, as I understood, was put off until I should be in a condition to be able to sit upright in the dock. When I became able to speak, I was waited on by a man of the law. I knew not who sent him, but suspected that he came at the bidding of Augustus, who probably thought I might yet be brought off. I told the man the truth; and requested him to ascertain whether my aunt was in her senses when she made the declaration on her death-bed. He answered, that he had already made inquiries on that subject, but that none of the witnesses would admit that she was otherwise than sane; and the circumstance of her having been on her death-bed militated against me. He seemed to pity me, but held out no hope. I asked to have one meeting with Augustus, but knew not whether my message reached him. He never came; and I had no relatives to take a part for me in my defence.

The day of trial came; and I was removed in a carriage to the justice-hall, and placed at the bar. No one could have known me. I was the mere ghost of what I was; and would have fallen from my seat, had I not been supported by two officers who sat by my side. I answered the judge's question of guilty or not guilty without rising, according to custom; and the words were no sooner out of my mouth,

than I fainted. When I recovered, the trial had begun. The sound of the witnesses' voices seemed to come to me through some other medium than the ear; for, though seemingly unconscious, I yet heard. Mrs Ball appeared, and swore to the statement of Mrs Greville. The maid-servant identified the jewels. Augustus Merling was put into the witness-box. He spoke the truth — what he had heard my aunt declare. His mother was also there, and she spoke the truth—what she had heard my aunt declare. What availed my story against such evidence? What jury could hesitate on a point so clear? I was condemned, and sentenced to transportation beyond seas for seven years; but my sentence was commuted for a year's imprisonment. How I bore that—where I have lived since my release—under what name, what privations, what agency, what madness—is it necessary for me to say? Twenty years have passed; and I am still a living, sensitive being. I have seen the children of Anne Ball and Augustus Merling, and I have also seen their parents, though they knew me not. O God! when shall I be relieved?

Such is the narrative of Miss Ballingal. I have no reason to think she was ever righted. I saw her die. I believe in the expression of an eye fixed on a world of spirits. I have also often seen a smile of triumph as the soul fluttered to depart.

THE WARNING

AMONG the inhabitants of Blackenburn, which was once the scene of some incidents in the following story, Nanny Ferly was perhaps the most extraordinary. If man, woman, or child had caught a cold of a week's standing, she never failed to discover a strong similarity between their case and the case of some one else who had died of consumption. Whether the complaint were toothache, or headache, or heartache, she seemed always certain that the symptoms were fatal; though sometimes she rather left people to infer the truth from certain significant hints which she gave them, than told it plain out. Upon these occasions, she would shake her head, turn up her eyes, groan audibly, and say, "Ay, ay, a fever often begins that way; and I've kenned mony a ane carried to their end by a sma' beginning." She believed as firmly in the existence of ghosts, wraiths, warnings before death, and, in short, all sorts of supernatural agency, as she believed in the truth of her Bible; and in these, along with her talk of "illnesses," "deaths," and "burials" (births and baptisms were not among her favourite subjects), she found the means of satisfying the craving of a morbid appetite for excitement, which she possessed in an eminent degree.

In the house which stood next to Nanny's lived Nelly Jackson, who was rather a shrewd, thinking woman, and in some respects the very antithesis of the former. She had brought her husband four children, most of whom were grown up. They had, however, upon several occasions, been seriously indisposed; but their mother, who already knew Nanny's propensity for peopling the other

world, and who, with a creditable degree of penetration, guessed the effect which the ominous shake of her head, and her usual "ay, ay," were likely to have upon the mind of a distressed person, carefully prevented her from getting to their presence while they were ill; and though Nanny did not fail to foretell their fate, in her usual significant way, among her other neighbours, by some mistake they all recovered. Nanny accounted herself not only neglected but insulted, by not being allowed to exercise her benevolence in visiting the sick at all seasons; Nelly, on the other hand, having seen her predictions falsified in the case of her own children, began to doubt that neither her foresight nor her piety were superior to those of others; she even ventured to speak rather slightingly of both, affirming that "nothing gave Nanny greater pleasure than to see her neighbours dying;" which speeches were borne to the ears of Nanny; and thus, though they neither came to fistycuffs nor high words, there was little love between them.

Next to Nelly, on the other side, lived Margaret M'Kenzie, her husband, and a daughter, whose name was Mary. Margaret was an honest, industrious, and, in most respects, a sensible woman; but, from the circumstance of having been accustomed to listen to it for a length of time, her neighbour Nanny's belief in the preternatural had acquired a considerable ascendency in her mind, and often influenced her thoughts; so that she might be regarded as a sort of medium between the two characters already described. She had born to her husband a son and a daughter; the former of whom had learned a trade and left them; but Mary, who when young was rather a delicate girl, had always been kept at home. To accommodate and keep her as comfortable as possible, a small apartment, with a chimney and a back window, had been fitted up in the *ben end* of the house; and in this little sanctum, besides assisting

her mother with the household concerns, she had earned her own subsistence with her needle for several years. Her constitution, of late, however, had greatly improved; and at nineteen—the time at which our story commences—she was a healthy, handsome, and, upon the whole, rather a good-looking young woman.

From the days of their childhood, a close intimacy hah subsisted between her and Jenny Jackson, who had been her playmate and confidant from the earliest period of her recollection. But somewhat more than a year previous to the time here referred to, Jenny had arrived at that age when it is common for parents in a certain station to send their daughters to "service out amang the farmers round," as Burns has phrased it, that they "may learn something of the world." This, at least, is almost always assigned as a general reason for such a step, and almost as often taken for granted. There are, however, several adjuncts, which nobody ever thinks of mentioning, and sundry little motives of a private or personal nature, which are not without their influence in determining both the parents and the girls themselves upon the propriety of going abroad. In the first place, when a young woman comes to be married—and most of them have a sort of presentiment that, at one time or other, they will have the *misfortune* to be so—she is always expected to provide, or bring along with her, a certain share of the furnishing of a house. Her share having been fixed by a sort of conventional laws, there is no escaping from it: at least there can be but little prospect of an honourable settlement in life without it—the other sex having, in general, enough to do with their own part of the concern, and being by no means more disinterested than the "true love" ballad-makers have represented them. To enable her to make this provision, the parents of a portionless lass can seldom do more than lend her some little assistance in the way of advice and management, leaving her to

procure the wherewithal, or, in other words, the money with which the furnishing of houses, and everything else, must be purchased by her own industry. Thus left, service in the country, and some regular occupation, such as the art of weaving in the towns, are the only alternatives; and to one or other of these she must early devote her attention, if she intends to be in the field of matrimony within a reasonable time.

To those who are acquainted with the tactics of the tender passion, it is, moreover, known that a bashful lover seldom cares for seeking the society of his fair one in the presence of her parents, while the fair one herself as seldom cares for being seen in the society of a lover by these relations. In such matters, a great deal of deceit, or, to speak more properly, of concealment, must be practised. There is a luxury in keeping all those delightful feelings, hopes, fears, fancies, and follies to one's-self; more than half the excitement of the thing, and consequently more than half its pleasure, would be destroyed if the secret were too soon divulged; and for some such reason, perhaps, your enamoured swain fears the eye of a mother, as being an interested party, and likely to be quick-sighted, more than that of any other human being. Whatever be the cause, the effect which it produces seems to be tolerably well understood by a very great majority of marriageable young women; and out of pity, as it would appear, for the failings of the other sex in general, and those of bashful young men in particular, they are sometimes willing to afford wooers an opportunity of seeing them in a less embarrassing situation.

Influenced by one or other, or both or neither of these reasons, motives, or whatever the reader chooses to call them, Jenny Jackson, with her mother's consent, engaged herself as a servant at a place called Heatherinch; and after having been nearly three quarters of a year in her place, she represented the advantages of "going to service"

in so favourable a light, that her young friend, Mary M'Kenzie, felt inclined to listen to any proposal which might give her a chance of similar advantages. Such a proposal was not long awanting; for it appeared that Jenny really had a situation in her eye, and that her previous discourse had been intended to prepare her friend for accepting it. Shortly thereafter, Mary was accordingly engaged to go at the ensuing Martinmas in the capacity of a servant girl to Cairnybraes, which was a farm lying at the distance of only a mile or so from Heatherinch; and she promised herself a whole world of satisfaction in being again so near her friend.

Here the reader will, no doubt, be inclined to think that Jenny was perfectly disinterested in these matters, and that she could have no motive for doing as she had done, except a wish to promote Mary's happiness. But, alas! how much of disinterestedness, charity, benevolence, and even piety itself, would disappear, if we could only apply the science of chemistry to the heart! Neither acids nor alkalis, however, can be brought to act upon it; and as for the crucible, the copple, and the fusing-pot, they are out of the question, so that a chemical analysis is not to be expected; and in the absence of such tests, we can only judge of causes from effects; or, in other words, we must judge of the heart from actions and appearances. Be it known then, that, within the first half-year of Jenny's service, two young men, who were also servants on the farm, had taken it into their heads to manifest rather more than an ordinary attachment to her. This she told not; but people do not expect to be told of such matters, and in the present instance they ascertained, or rather guessed, the truth, without any evidence from her. Their names were Andrew Angus and James Duff. Like herself, they were both engaged to remain for another year; and though Jenny might have managed their attentions and their addresses without much trouble, had

they been only lodged at a tolerable distance, she found it rather distressing to have them constantly so near her. In this emergency, it occurred to her that it were better to have one of them "taken off her hand;" for the performance of this feat, her friend, Mary M'Kenzie, was the most likely individual she could think of; and for Mary's future lover Andrew was set apart.

At the appointed time, Mary came to reside at Cairny-braes; but, as seeds cannot vegetate unless they are put into the ground, so neither can young people acquire an affection for each other unless they are brought together. Jenny could not muster courage enough to tell Andrew to "go and see Mary;" she did not like to bid Mary "come and see him;" and, therefore, she had recourse to manœuvring. The host of the Gazling Inn, on considering the case of his humble brethren, and the few opportunities they had of enjoying themselves, had agreed to give a New-year's entertainment to as many of them as could afford to pay half-a-crown. According to the advertisement on this occasion put forth, the said brethren, for their half-crowns, were to have the privilege of bringing an equal number of *sistren* along with them. It was farther stipulated, that they should have a sufficiency of tea, sugar, bread, and butter set before them, or rather dealt out to them; a man with a fiddle and a fiddlestick was also to be provided, for those who might be inclined to dance; after which, all and sundry were to have as much liquor as they should choose to drink and *pay for*. Such an opportunity was by no means to be neglected, and the only matter of importance which Jenny had now to decide upon was, how she might procure a partner for Mary with whom *she* was not likely to fall in love. Andrew must be managed cautiously, lest he should become restive, and more stubbornly attached to herself than he had been before. He had no previous acquaintance of Mary, and it were both awkward

and indelicate, she argued, to send him off to seek a woman to whom he had not so much as spoken on any former occasion. She, moreover, did not like the idea of *dismissing* him, which would have been implied in such a proceeding. She therefore deemed it best to bring the *candle to the moth*, as if by accident, and allow him to flutter around it till he was fairly singed. For this purpose, a neighbouring rustic, called Ritchie Drycraig, was selected as one who was likely to perform his part, and, at the same time, leave Mary's heart free to be impressed with the image of another. By a slight exercise of maiden ingenuity, a little coaxing, and some sly hints, Ritchie was induced to set forth on his mission. The expected evening came—the various parties made their appearance—and so far all was right.

Burns has told us, that

"The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley;"

and fortunate it were for the world, if mice and men were the only portions of society to whose schemes accident might give a wrong direction; but, alas! there is no perfection on this earth, and the schemes of women miscarry almost as often as those of their neighbours. Contrary to all reasonable expectation, and to everything like rational conduct, Andrew took no notice of Mary, while James Duff seemed to regard her with considerable attention, and "puir drucken Ritchie" appeared to be perfectly bewitched by her presence. With respect to Mary herself, it was easy to see that she was rather pleased than otherwise with those indirect attentions and little notices which, in the course of the evening, she received from the said James Duff; and, notwithstanding his previous attachment to Jenny, it almost appeared that he would have volunteered his service to conduct her home. But vain was every at-

tempt of the kind. Even if the maiden had been willing to accept of such service, from Ritchie there was no possibility of escaping. Mary had little skill in these matters; she could not manage them after the manner of well-bred damsels, and her only alternative was to allow him to carry her off.

At first Ritchie was "a' crack thegither;" but scarcely had they got beyond the precincts of the Gazling Inn, when the conversation began to flag, and, after a considerable silence, which his companion had in vain endeavoured to break—

"Mary," said he, prefacing his discourse with sundry hiccups, "I've fa'n in love wi' ye."

"Fa' out o't as fast as possible, then," said Mary, attempting to laugh, though she really began to feel alarmed.

"Oh, Mary, Mary!" again began the maudlin young man most pathetically to plead. "Oh, Mary, if ye only kenned what a heart I have, and how aften I've lookit at you when I never spake a word, ye wad never bid me do that."

"Lookit at *me*," rejoined the other, affecting to be greatly surprised; "and pray what may the price of a *look* be? If looks are to be made debts, I doubt my little property, which consists only of the claes on my back, will soon fail, and I must become a bankrupt."

"Ah, Mary," persevered her undaunted wooer, "ye ken brawly what I mean; but you surely never kenned what it was to be in love, or ye wad never jeer a body that way."

"Love, they say, is warm," replied Mary, "and I would rather be *in it*, or in my master's kitchen, or in my bed, or anywhere else, than *out* in this cauld night; so, if you do not walk faster, I shall be forced to run away and leave you."

"My dear Mary," said he of the Drycraig, mending his

pace a little, though it was evident he did so with great reluctance—"my dear Mary, I could gang at the gallop, or I could gang like a snail, or I could gang owre a linn and drown mysel, or owre a craig and brak my neck, or speak, or haud my tongue, or do ony other thing on earth, for your sake, if ye would only allow me to love ye, and say ye loved me again."

"Weel, I must confess you would do a great deal for me," said Mary, beginning to enjoy his extravagance—teasing as he had become—and scarcely able to refrain from laughing at him; "you would really do a great deal; but take my advice for the present: keep your head above water, and your neck hale as lang as ye can; neither gang owre the linn nor the craig, but the neist time you are in a company, let fewer linns gang owre your *ain* craig; and, in the meantime, neither speak of love, nor haud your tongue a'thegither, but *gang at the gallop!*—that will please me best; for my mistress must be angry at me for staying out sae late. Or, stop! I might run a race with you for a penny—the loser to pay the stake—and then, I can tell you some other time whether you are to love me or not. Maidens, they say, should aye be mealy-mouthed at first."

As she uttered these words, she secretly determined, if possible, never to give him another opportunity of making such a proposition. She also resolved to bear with him for the present, and leave him to learn her real sentiments from her future conduct. A crisis, however, was approaching which she had not foreseen, and for which she was wholly unprepared. Her protector, who had drank rather too liberally at the Gazling Inn, was now beginning to be in such a state that he would have almost required a protector himself. The moment he heard Mary's light-hearted declaration, his emotion seemed to overcome him, he made a dead stand, and exclaimed, in the most piteous accents—

"I canna gang anither fit!"

"Foul fa' you and your feet baith," said Mary, forgetting the resolution which she had formed only a minute ago, and nearly losing her good-humour at the same time. "I tell ye," she continued, "that I should been hame lang syne, and d'ye think that I can bide here the hale night to hear you haver nonsense."

"O Mary, Mary!" rejoined the man of exclamations, "this sets the crown on a' my misfortunes, and I'll never do mair guid. Twice owre this same night I saw you looking at Jamie Duff: ye love him, and no me. O Mary, Mary, Mary!" and therewith he threw himself down upon the earth, or rather in a puddle of dirty water by the road-side, at full length, and began to weep and groan, in great tribulation. When his inarticulate wailings would permit, he again muttered half sentences about walking over the linn or the craig, and he even threw out hints of an intention to leave the world in that most ungentlemanly manner in which the law sometimes disposes of very dissolute characters. As the liquor with which he had been drenching his system had no doubt heightened the effects of his sensibility, his sensibility now heightened the effects of the liquor; and between them he was soon in a sad state of mental as well as bodily distemperature.

Mary, who had little experience in these matters, would have readily given all the worlds which all the Alexanders and Cæsars on earth ever conquered, had she been mistress of them, for some one to assist her in conducting him to any house where he might find shelter for the night, or perhaps, as she thought, a bed on which he might breathe his last. Fortunately for her, she soon heard the noise of footsteps approaching; and, in a few minutes more, she had the satisfaction of seeing, or rather hearing, James Duff, with his convoy, which was not a merchantman, but a marriageable woman, bear down upon her.

James had been left in quiet possession of Jenny Jackson, in consequence of Andrew—who was certainly the most enamoured lover—having got rather fuddled; from which circumstance he had been left at the inn to sleep off his debauch; and, though the hands of the former were already full, he did not appear offended, nor even greatly distressed, at the accident which gave him an opportunity of again meeting Mary. He immediately lifted the fallen man from the ground, on which he was still lying in a half-senseless state, and, with the assistance of the two maidens, who, in this instance, lent their aid, "nothing loth," conducted him to the nearest house, where they left him to recover from his drench.

Mary was now for running home as fast as possible, but the gallantry of her new acquaintance would not permit him to think of allowing her to go alone; he therefore proposed that she should go with them to Heatherinch, which was but a short way out of her road, and, after seeing Jenny safely lodged, he would accompany her at least a part of her journey. To this proposal Jenny was far from giving a hearty sanction, but the other seemed determined for once to take his own way. She had her own reasons for wishing not to thwart him openly, and, after some trifling demurs, she acquiesced. James, accordingly, escorted Mary as far as her master's barn-yard, which was certainly the most considerable part of her journey; and here, notwithstanding the lateness, or rather earliness of the hour, and her previous hurry to get home, they spent they knew not how long on the leeward side of a *strae stack*, conversing on various subjects, which to them, and to the whole world, might have been deemed of very little importance; and, though neither of them spoke one word of love, or made the slightest allusion to that interesting subject, it was almost morning before they thought of separating.

The night adventure, thus happily got over, produced no

bad consequences; but it was not long before Mary was again threatened with the addresses of Ritchie Drycraig. To these, however, she had sagely determined not to listen, if she could by any possibility do otherwise; and when, according to the established rules of society, he presented himself at her bedroom window between the hours of ten and twelve P.M., making his presence known by a gentle rap upon the glass and a low whistle, she was under the necessity of feigning sickness oftener than once to get quit of him. But this, as it afforded her an excuse for not seeing him, so it gave him a pretext for returning to inquire after her health; and to avoid him, in a short time, it would have become absolutely necessary for her to lie constantly in bed. This would not do, and a new expedient was tried. Next time he made his appearance, the new moon gave a faint and uncertain light, which seemed to suit her purpose very well; and from the half-opened window she whispered in his ear a terrifying tale of a ghost, which had been lately seen walking under the shelter of a hedge immediately in front of the house. She pointed out the very bush from which it had emerged; and just as she concluded, the obedient ghost made its appearance, wrapped up in as much white drapery as the wardrobe of any ordinary ghost could be supposed to contain. But the terrified lover, instead of taking to his heels, as the damsel had expected, thrust his head and shoulders in at the window, which she had raised a little for the purpose of speaking to him; and the next moment he stood bolt upright in the room beside her. This was mending matters with a vengeance. The very plan which she had adopted to drive him from the *outside* of the house, had driven him to the *inside* of it; and, what was worse, she was left with him alone. From the odour of his breath, it was evident that he did not lack inspiration; and finding himself snugly housed, with the "maid of his heart" beside him, notwithstanding the terrors of the ghost, he

was beginning to talk of love; and had it not been for the other servant girl, who came in shortly after, it is probable he might have reached the "linns" and the "craigs," as he had done on a former occasion, before he had thought of stopping. She, however, assured him that she had heard her master stirring above-stairs—which, by the by, is always a formidable announcement to an enamoured swain—and warned him to make what haste he could in getting home. But this information, though it increased his perplexity to an immeasurable extent, and effectually silenced him upon the former subject, gave him neither strength nor courage to face an inhabitant of the other world alone, and at the ominous hour of midnight. Judging that it were better to fight within walls than without them, whether the enemies were spiritual or temporal, he continued to keep his position; nor was it till the other servant girl had persuaded one of the young men who slept in the house, and who was supposed to set some value on her own good opinion, to leave his bed, and promise to conduct Ritchie beyond the haunted neighbourhood, that he could be prevailed upon to depart.

The hiring time at last came round; the whole of the servants on Cairnybraes were engaged for another year, and Mary's master and mistress were anxious that she should remain also. They had every reason to be satisfied with her integrity, industry, and general good conduct; and when she did not readily accept of their terms, they even went so far as to offer her a slight advance of wages, but to no purpose. Application was next made to her father and mother, in the expectation that they might succeed in persuading her to remain where she was. They readily consented to use their influence, never dreaming that she would reject any request which they might proffer; but, for the first time in their lives, they had the mortification of seeing their wishes disregarded. For no persuasion, and upon no condition, could she be prevailed on to engage for another year;

and, what was still more strange, she would assign no reason for leaving her place. Her unaccountable humour in this respect gave rise to a number of conjectures as to its cause, of which one or two may be noticed in passing.

Some people said that the ghost had scared her as well as Ritchie Drycraig; others supposed that she must have a "lad" about the bleachfield, who found it inconvenient to come so far to see her; but the most general opinion was, that she wished to bring either the foresaid Ritchie, or James Duff, both of whom were regarded as a sort of *danglers*, or distant admirers, to an explanation. Here be it remarked, that this is a subject upon which young women in general can only endure silence with any degree of patience for a limited time. Some, as a matter of course, will hold out for a longer and some for a shorter season, just as their natural temper may chance to be ardent or otherwise. But, assuredly, the patience of the most plodding maiden on earth, if her heart should happen to be infected with the tender passion, will come to an end; and then, neither man, woman, young, old, or middle-aged, can tell what measures she may adopt, or what agency she may employ to bring forth the important secret. Some novelist or other has said—in spleen it would almost appear—"that in the higher circles there is a regular system of managing these matters—that the whole had been reduced to a science; and that an initiated damsel understands how to play her part in the important concern of getting a husband nearly as well as she understands a game at cards!" This, if true, must be an immense acquisition to young ladies; but, as the "schoolmaster" has not yet been so far "abroad" as to bring the discovery down to the country girl and the village maiden, these are wholly left to their own shifts—and shifts, at times, they must try. But, as to these, the present writer would be almost wholly ignorant, were it not for certain of the sex themselves,

whom he has heard declare that a quarrel about something or nothing is one of their most natural expedients, and, as such, is frequently resorted to with good effect. Next in order, according to the above-mentioned authorities, is a *flitting* or separation, which is to last for a length of time: such a step seems to throw the parties concerned at once upon their beam-ends; and before they can trim their ballast again, the secret may chance to "spunk out." Thus there was, at least, a show of reason in some of the conjectures just alluded to. But after having noticed these things, that the reader may judge of their probabilities and improbabilities for himself, to keep up the dignity and the veracity of history, he must now be told the truth.

By this time, Mary was completely tired of the tricks and shifts by which she had endeavoured to evade the persevering *Ritchie*, who, whenever his *dry-craig* was moistened with the *water of life*, or any other strong water, was certain to pester her with his visits and importunities. She also considered it highly dishonourable in herself to encourage any feelings in James Duff which might have a tendency to seduce him from his allegiance to another; and, to be free from these annoyances and temptations, with which she knew not how to contend, she honourably and resolutely determined to return home.

At the Martinmas term Mary accordingly took up her abode again with her parents at Blackenburn. The day on which she returned was wet and stormy, and she caught a cold, which kept her rather indisposed for three weeks. The most fearful in such cases, however, could have seen no reason for apprehending the slightest danger, till Sabbath morning ushered in the fourth week. But, on this particular morning, though Mary felt much better, her mother appeared uncommonly thoughtful, or rather seriously alarmed. From her husband and daughter, however, she endeavoured to conceal her perturbation as much as pos-

sible, and as soon as her neighbour's door was opened, she went to inquire for Mrs Jackson.

"How are ye this morning?" said she, as she entered.

"No that ill!" was the reply. "How are ye yoursel?"

"I may be thankfu, I've no reason to complain!" said the other, in a tone which was in itself a complaint.

"Dear me, Margate," rejoined Nelly, "what's wrang? I have not seen ye look so ill for many a day, as ye do this precious morning. Something is distressing ye, I doubt."

"May the Lord have mercy upon me and mine!" ejaculated Margaret, wiping away a tear as she spoke; "but, saving His holy will, I fear I have *oure* guid reason to be distressed."

"Sorry am I to hear that!" responded Nelly, catching almost unintentionally the low impressive tone of her neighbour. "But what is't, woman, if I may speer?"

This was exactly what Margaret wanted, to enable her to unburden her mind; and she now proceeded to tell the cause of her distress. Some time about midnight, or it might be toward morning, she could not be certain which, she had been awakened from her sleep, by what she described as "a sharp rap upon the window, followed by a lang laigh sough, like the wind whistling in a toom house." She rose stealthily from her bed, to ascertain, if possible, the cause of these unwonted noises, and, while she stood irresolute in the middle of the floor, she heard a low, husky, indistinct voice, which, she said, "resembled that of a dying man," pronounce the word *Mary*. "At hearing that voice," she continued, "every hair on my head stood on end, and my very flesh shook as if it would have fa'n from my banes; but a mother's affection for her ain bairn, and my anxiety anent Mary's distress, made me desperate; and, to be satisfied whether it was onything earthly which had uttered that word, I opened the door, and there I saw her wraith standing at the window as clear as ever I saw hersel!—Oh sirs! oh sirs! That sight gars my flesh a' creep whenever I think

on't! It was a' dressed in white except the head, and that was as black as our Mary's, and it's black aneugh, ye ken. It was just about her size, too, as nearly as I could guess; but as soon as it saw me it glided round by the end of the house, without moving foot or hand, and was out of sight in an instant. And now, let a' the doctors, and a' the neighbours on earth say what they will, I believe that my Mary, poor thing, is fa'en into a decline, and that this was nae-thing but a *warning!*—Wo's me!—wo's me!"

"Hout, woman!" said Nelly, who had listened to this mournful recapitulation, not without some indications of doubt as to its authenticity—"hout, woman; yesterday was *pay-day*, as they ca't, among the bleachers, and I'll warrant the wraith was just some scamp frae the bleachfield, wha had gotten himself half-fou, and wanted to get a while's daffin wi' the lassie, Sabbath morning though it was."

"O Nelly, Nelly!" rejoined the other, "I wonder to hear ye speak at that rate, after what happened in Nanny Ferly's last summer!"

Finding that she was not likely to meet with much sympathy here, Margaret left the house rather abruptly. But her mind was in a state of perturbation which forbade her to rest, and she hastened forthwith to Nanny Ferly, her next neighbour, to whom she told the same story, word for word, and had the satisfaction—if satisfaction it can be called—of seeing every circumstance listened to with the deepest attention, and every syllable believed as readily as if it had been part of a sermon.

"Ay, ay, Margate," said her auditor, when she had heard the story to an end, "it's a warning, shure aneugh; and that will be seen before lang; for I never kenned a warning fail. I'll mind that nicht as lang as I live, when the warning came for my sister's dochter, Lizzy Lawmont; and weel I wat she was as dear to me as if she had been my ain bairn —though I've aye been spared the fashery o' bairns. Aweel,

the doctor said she was greatly better; and sae, as I was complainin at the time, she was taen ben the house, to let me get some rest; and Lizzy Duncan—glaikit hizzy! as she has turned oot—cam to sit up for the nicht. The doors were baith steekit, and the lamp was blawn out in the expectation that she would fa' asleep, and I was lying waukin, with the *worm in my lug*, when I hears a rap at the windock, just as ye heard it, and something said *Lizzy*, as laigh and as plain as I'm saying it enoo. Aweel, I startit up, expecting to find the dear lassie a corpse, but it was some time before I could gang ben to see; and when I did gang ben, I found her waukening frae a sleep; and Lizzy Duncan said she had sleepit mair than twa hours. But, from that minute, I kenned brawly what was to happen, and from that minute she grew waur and waur, till the neist nicht about ten o'clock, when the speerit left her weel-faured clay to the worms. Sae, Margate, never build yoursel up in Nelly's nonsense about *lads;* she's a puir haverin body; and, as shure as the sun rises and sets, your Mary is gaun fast from this world, e'en as my Lizzy gaed before her."

The poor mother was affected to tears by these lugubrious observations. The propriety of apprising Mary of her approaching fate was next adverted to by Nanny. Margaret did not adopt her views of the matter at first; but when the culpability of allowing her daughter to indulge in the vanities of the world, when so near her end, was represented to her, she gave her consent, with a flood of tears; and, after making some arrangements for communicating the necessary information, they parted.

The day, for one in the middle of winter, appeared to be uncommonly inviting, and Mary, who now fancied herself quite well, proposed going to church. To this proposal she expected a number of objections from her mother, but she was rather agreeably disappointed, for Margaret only observed, in an unusually solemn tone, that "folk should gang

to the kirk as lang as they were able," and she accordingly went. When the congregation was dismissed, the air was almost as mild as if it had been summer; the sun shone faintly but cheerfully upon the faded scene, giving an unwonted appearance of warmth to the southern slopes and sunny side of the hedges. Some feathery songsters were still warbling their "wilde notes" from the leafless trees, and, on her way home, Mary felt her spirits cheered, and her whole frame invigorated, by the fresh air and the universal calm. The scene, the season, and the sacred day, alike seemed to "woo the heart to meditation;" and she was proceeding a short way in advance of the other worshippers, doubtless wrapped in some reverie, when her thoughts, whatever they might be, were dissipated by Nanny Ferly, who, puffing and panting from the effects of rapid travelling, now came up and addressed her from behind.

"That's a braw gown ye have on the day, Mary," were her first words, uttered in a tone of more than sepulchral solemnity.

"Nae brawer than ordinary," was Mary's reply.

This did not appear to be exactly the answer which had been anticipated, and Nanny—who, like other far-sighted individuals, had no doubt calculated the chances of the conversation, and provided herself with sentiments suitable to the occasion—seemed to feel rather *out*. She soon recovered, however, and adjusting her sails to the wind, proceeded upon a new tack.

"I was just thinking, as I came up behint you," she went on, "what vain and frail creatures we a' are! We labour to deck out our bodies in dainty claes, and to appear strong and healthful, and engaging in the eyes of others, when we should be thinking of our winding-sheets and our coffins, and meditating on the worms which are shortly to prey upon us in darkness. And maybe at the very time when we are bestowing the greatest care upon thae worldly vanities, death

may be hovering owre us, with his hand stretched out to smite, and giving us *warning* to prepare for our last gasp, and that sma' house which is theekit wi' the lang grass o' the kirkyard."

"A' that may be true," rejoined Mary; "but what, if I may speir, has gi'en sic a kirkyard turn to your conversation the day? I am better now, I assure you, and I hope you dinna think that, because I had the cauld aught days since, and because I have on a new gown the day, I maun die neist week."

"That's just the way with foolish young creatures in general, and you amang the lave," resumed her companion, waxing yet more solemn in her tone and manner of speaking. "They aye keep the day of distress and of death far away from themselves: but death stays not his dart for their folly, and the messenger will come at his time, whether they will think of his coming, or whether they will keep their thoughts fixed upon worldly vanity."

"What *is* the meaning of all this?" said Mary, who now began to feel somewhat alarmed. "Has anybody persuaded you that I am really dying, or that I am not as likely to live as others of my age, because I have had a slight cold, from which I am now perfectly recovered? Tell me at once, for I can endure your mysterious hints no longer."

"Then I must tell you the truth," said Nanny, whose voice had now reached the uttermost pitch of solemnity which it could compass—"I must tell you the truth, though I had meant to prepare you, but in part, for what is before you. And think not lightly of it, I beseech you, for it is indeed a terrible thing to go down to the grave in the bloom of youth, and to be a feast for *snails* and worms, when we are promising ourselves many days of worldly enjoyment. But, as I said, I maun e'en tell you the truth, as I telled my ain dear Lizzy Lawmont, when she was on her death-bed; and weel it was that I did tell her without delay; for, from that minute, puir Lizzy postit to her grave."

Here she went over the whole story of the *warning*, with such additions, emendations, and exaggeration, as were necessary to give it its full effect. In this department of literary science she displayed a power of contrivance and an ingenuity which might have done honour to a professed *story-teller*. But in the present instance her art seemed to be almost thrown away; for, after she had given the finishing touch to the picture—and she did it with a master-hand—

"Is that a'?" said Mary, with a smile, which showed that her heart was greatly, if not wholly relieved—"is that a'?" she repeated, in a tone which made her fellow-traveller turn her eyes to heaven with a feeling of pious indignation.

"Ay, that's a'," rejoined Nanny, with a degree of pique in her manner which she could not conceal; "and little effect it *a'* seems to hae upon you! But I maun go and spier for auld John Gavel, wha has been sair distressed for mair than a fortnight; and sae, guid-day." As she spoke the last word, she left Mary to pursue her journey alone, and turned down another road, with the friendly intention, no doubt, of persuading Mr Gavel that he was beyond all hope of recovery."

Wonderful as it may seem, after what had happened, Mary continued to enjoy good health, and what was still more unaccountable, excellent spirits, for a whole fortnight. Without making any direct allusion to the *warning*, from which she evidently wished to keep at as great a distance as possible, she did everything in her power to dissipate her mother's apprehensions on that subject; but at the end of this period, the fears of the latter were again awakened in all their force, and as soon as the neighbours were astir, she again hastened to lay the burden of her distress before Nanny Ferly.

"O Nanny, Nanny!" said she, wringing her hands, as

she entered the domicile, "sic a night as I've passed? If the Lord should give me strength to endure, I must not complain; but, I fear, if thae awfu things continue to happen about our house, I'll no stand it lang, or if I do stand it, I'll surely lose my reason."

"What have you seen or heard?" inquired Nanny, eagerly, as soon as she could get in a word.

"I've heard as muckle as micht drive a mither oot o' her senses," was the reply; "and it has driven rest frae my bed, and ilka Sabbath-day's thocht out o' my head. But, to tell ye what it was:—Some time after midnight, I heard the very same sharp rap at the window that I heard yesternight was a fortnight; and, as I've never sleepit sound since that awfu nicht, I started up, and listened. Aweel, after awhile, the rap was repeated, but naething spake; and then I heard a deep, low sound upon the window-frame, which I could compare to naething save the noise of bringing in an empty coffin; and then Nelly Jackson's dog gae a bark, and I heard nae mair. I was aye trying to convince mysel that it micht be only a trick the first time, and this conviction gathered strength when I saw the lassie keep her health frae day to day; but I doubt, I doubt, something *is* gaun to happen now!"

"Ay, ay!" was Nanny's response; and as she spoke her voice assumed its gravest tone; "it's owre like something *will* happen, and that before it's lang. Puir John Gavel's wife heard a soughing i' the lum twa nichts afore he died; and I telled baith her and him what wad happen, and happen it did, sure aneugh."

Unquestionable as these warnings had been considered, their fulfilment, to Nanny's great discomfiture, did not follow so speedily as had been expected. The new-year season again came round, without anything extraordinary having happened; and with it came Jenny Jackson's wedding. Jenny's scheme, like the "schemes" of the before-

mentioned "mice and men," had entirely failed. With a degree of vanity which may be easily pardoned, she had been led to suppose that James Duff was really attached to her, while he, in reality, only bestowed some attention upon her for the purpose of *plaguing* Andrew, and to amuse himself when he had nothing else to do; but, from the evening on which he first saw Mary M'Kenzie, he had become less and less assiduous in these attentions, till, in the end, she began to grow fearful of "losing the market" altogether, and was glad to accept an offer of marriage from Andrew, almost as soon as it was made. But, though the said James, in country phrase, had *drawn back,* he had carefully avoided everything like a quarrel; and, as they had been fellow-servants, and had, moreover, been upon the most friendly terms up to the very day on which they parted, he was invited to the wedding.

Passing over the ceremony, and all that concerned it, Mary Mackenzie was also among the wedding guests, and she did not appear to be forgotten by James Duff; for he embraced the first opportunity which presented itself of renewing their old acquaintance, by placing himself beside her. Upon this occasion, she appeared to receive him with more open frankness than she had ever done before, while he appeared highly gratified with the change of sentiment which she now manifested towards him. For a time, they carried on a sort of exclusive conversation, in very low and confidential tones; and, when Mary afterwards complained that she felt uncomfortably warm, from the number of people congregated in the small room, James proposed to take a walk in the open air. This proposal was readily agreed to; and, the evening being calm and still, though dark and cloudy, they sauntered for some distance along the road, in the direction which led out of the village. James did not seem to suppose that any one would expect their return; he seemed to have forgotten everything except

his companion; and he would have wandered on, neglectful alike of the distance from home and the lapse of time, had not Mary ventured to remind him of the possibility of their being missed from the company, if they should prolong their walk, and hinted the propriety of immediately returning.

This hint—gentle in itself, and sounded, or rather whispered in his ear, by a voice the very gentlest imaginable—nevertheless, seemed to strike him as something wholly unexpected; and, while they turned to retrace their steps, he appeared rather at a loss what to say. The truth was, he had been thinking for some time past of introducing a subject in which he felt he was deeply interested; but, as he had never in his life before had occasion to introduce such a subject to the notice of a woman, he knew not how to begin, and hence his inattention to the matter of miles and furlongs, and the length of their walk. Fearing, however, that another opportunity equally favourable might not soon occur, or perhaps he might be influenced by the idea that some one more favourably situated might supersede him—it matters little which—at length he did make out to declare his affection; with what tones, or in what words, has not been recorded.

The days, at this season of the year, being nearly at the shortest, and the nights at the longest, the evening's festivity was early begun, and the bridal merriment had lasted at least five hours before ten o'clock. By this time, James Duff, who had a number of miles to travel before he could reach his master's farm, and who, moreover, had to attend his work next day, began to think of taking his departure. But, while the mirth and festivity had been proceeding within, the weather had been getting gradually more and more stormy without. For the last half-hour, the wind had been howling furiously and loud around the house; the few stars which were visible "sent down a sklintin light;" the clouds, previously accumulated, had

begun to career overhead; and, at the time spoken of, a blinding fall of snow came on. James, however, would have proceeded on his journey; but Mary, as soon as she saw the state of the weather, insisted on the propriety, or rather necessity, of his stopping till morning. With her wishes in this respect he declared himself ready to comply, if she could only find some place of shelter where they might pass what remained of the night, and promise to keep him company. But with this she was not to be satisfied. Though he seemed to set little value on his health, she said that she could not consent to see him wilfully throwing it away. The night was now piercing cold; and as he must be fatigued with his previous journey, and would have to work hard next day, she insisted on being allowed to provide him with a bed. Beds, however, were not easy to be found in the neighbourhood—there being in most of the houses no more accommodation than what was necessary for the families they contained; but the ingenuity of woman, when really and fairly set to work, is seldom baffled. She soon recollected a female acquaintance who slept alone; and, by taking up her quarters with this individual, her own bed would be left for the reception of him for whose comfort she now seemed to consider it her duty to provide. This arrangement completed, she conducted him to her mother's, where no opposition was offered to her scheme; and, after placing a light for him in her own little room, and bidding him an affectionate good-night, she left him to his repose, which, as the sequel will show, was not destined to be unbroken.

Both pleased and excited by the occurrences of the evening, the blood coursed his veins too rapidly to admit of sleep for a time. He had, however, closed his eyes, and a dream had begun to operate upon his imagination. It was a dream of a house which he could call his own, a clean hearth, and a cheerful fire, with himself snugly seated in

an arm-chair on one side of it, and Mary sitting on the other, knitting a stocking; and, ever as he addressed her, bending on him a pair of smiling eyes. Alas! what is the happiness of man, in most instances, save a dream—sometimes a waking one, sometimes a sleeping one—but seldom real! From this pleasing illusion he was awakened by a noise at the window; and the house, clean hearth, cheerful fire, arm-chair, along with Mary and her stocking, at once disappeared in darkness. He heard her name repeated in a low whisper; and, after a considerable pause, the noise increased. Upon this occasion, it appeared to be something worse than an ordinary *warning*—bad as that might be—for it continued. At first jealousy took possession of his heart. "Could it be possible that Mary was making a dupe of him, while she really preferred another? And could it be that *other* who was now making a noise for the purpose of awakening her?" These were questions which, in his first surprise, he naturally put to himself, without being exactly able to answer them. Something more serious, however, than the awakening of young women seemed to be in the wind, and his next thought was of robbers. This idea, upon farther consideration, he was also forced to reject; for he had remarked that, except the bed upon which he was lying, a table, a small mirror, and some trifling articles of female attire, there was neither chest, chest of drawers, nor anything else in the apartment which could possibly conceal treasure; and it was not likely that practised robbers would put themselves to much trouble for beds, tables, and six-inch mirrors. Upon these things he had ample time to reflect; for the operations at the window neither appeared to be scientific nor successful. They consisted of a sort of half-cautious rubbing and scratching, which was kept up with little intermission; and at last he felt inclined to think that the whole might be the work of some one who had sat too long at the bottle, and, after

being deserted by his companions, had forgotten to go to bed. But, then, unless he were in some way or other connected with Mary, or unless his visits at least had, on some former occasion, been sanctioned by her, what reason could he have for selecting that particular window as the scene of his nocturnal operations? A certain degree of reviving jealousy, mingled with a strong feeling of curiosity, now took full possession of the doubtful lover's mind; and having, to his own astonishment, remained so long silent, he resolved to await the issue without uttering a word. Fortunately he had heard nothing of warnings, and but little of ghosts; the little which he had heard he entirely discredited; and, by attributing the whole directly to *natural* and not *supernatural* agency, he felt strengthened to abide by his resolution—a circumstance which could have hardly occurred, had he held, in its full perfection, the doctrine of the *visibility* of spirits.

The noise continued for nearly an hour and a-half; and when it ceased, after something like a gentle wrench bestowed upon the window-frame, he heard a foot cautiously approaching the bed on which he lay; and, by compressing his lips with a desperate effort, and almost stifling his very breath, he suppressed an involuntary inclination to start up, and either place himself in a posture of defence, or give the alarm. In half-a-minute more, he felt a cold, rough, clammy hand pass over his face. A freezing sense of terror, which had nearly converted him from his scepticism with respect to ghosts, shot directly to his heart, and a chill perspiration was bursting from his brow; with the next breath he had probably started to his feet, and attempted to fly; but at that instant he was relieved by hearing a voice with which he was well acquainted, in soft and tremulous accents, pronounce the word *Mary*. That he might be certain as to the identity of the speaker, he waited till he heard the name repeated, and then spoke.

"Friend," said he, in a stern voice, "I doubt you seek one who is not here;" and, as he spoke, he made an attempt to grasp the former speaker. But his words, few and commonplace as they were, had produced a more instantaneous effect upon that individual than the most powerful exorcism of a Catholic priest ever produced upon rats, mice, or any other pest of humanity. The moment the first syllable sounded in his ears, he made a hasty retreat; and after the intruder was gone, the little that remained of the night passed without farther disturbance.

Mary had felt too much oppressed with tumultuous, yet happy feelings, to sleep during the night, so that there was little danger of her being late in rising; and, according to a promise made on the previous evening, she was at her mother's cottage some hours before daylight. In a few minutes the fire was lighted up, and she was proceeding to cook a slight repast for the stranger, when he himself made his appearance in that apartment which might be called the kitchen. She saluted him by inquiring "how he had rested?" and he answered her with an attempt at civility; but his eye did not meet hers as it had done on the previous evening; and altogether there was an alteration in his manner which struck her forcibly. She next begged him to be seated; but, instead of complying with her request, he looked at his watch, and then represented to her the necessity of his being gone immediately. She seemed anxious that he should stop till she could set before him the victuals which she had been preparing, simply, as she said, "that he might not go abroad so early with an empty stomach;" but her entreaties were thrown away; and, when nothing could persuade him to delay his journey only for a few minutes, she accompanied him out in a state of perplexed feeling not easily described. She had walked by his side to some distance without anything having passed between them, except some trite observations concerning

the weather, which was now fair—the fall of snow having only lasted for a short time—when, unable longer to endure this state of suspense, she asked, in a hesitating tone, if "anything had occurred during the night to disturb him?"

"I have been a fool!" was his tart reply; "but I am at least wise enough to repent of my folly in time. I was loth to believe the evidence of my own senses when they testified against you, and I even tried to argue myself into a belief of your innocence, but your question puts the matter beyond a doubt; and now, farewell for ever!"

Mary would have remonstrated with him as to the rashness of his conduct—she would have told him what she knew. The warmth of a lately awakened affection, a woman's pride, a woman's delicacy, and a feeling of indignation at being thus suspected, were all at strife in her bosom; and it can scarcely be matter of surprise, if for some seconds they deprived her of the use of speech. As he was turning to depart, however, she mustered as much resolution as to repeat the word "farewell" firmly, which was all she could say.

When left alone, Mary felt so much agitated, that it was some time before she could endure the thought of being seen. Darkness and solitude seemed to accord best with the state of her feelings, and to afford her the only consolation which she was capable of receiving. In this state of mind, it was some time before she could think of returning home; and, when she did return, a new scene of mystery and confusion awaited her.

At the door she met her mother, who, with a countenance uncommonly solemn, was just coming out. Margaret, who, from having slept more soundly than was her usual, had only heard the concluding part of the nocturnal noises, was again in a great distress. She believed them nothing less than a *third warning;* which, according to vulgar superstition, is an infallible proof; and on the present, as

on former occasions, she was hastening to communicate this fresh confirmation of her fears to Nanny Ferly. But she was immediately recalled by her husband, who, on returning from the yard, whither he had been to reconnoitre the morning sky, for the purpose of ascertaining what sort of weather they were likely to have for the day, declared, "that their back-window had been taken out, and that Mary's room had certainly been robbed." On being made acquainted with this circumstance, great was the good dame's consternation; and yet it were difficult to say whether she would not have preferred the loss of her daughter's property, or any other property which might be in the house, to those distressing fears which she had hitherto entertained for the loss of that daughter herself.

"God be thankit!" she exclaimed, after a short pause—"there was but little to rob."

A strict examination was now instituted, to ascertain if property had not been abstracted from other parts of the house; but in this examination Mary took little share.

"What's the lassie doin dreamin there, as if she were bewildered?" cried her mother at last, with some impatience. "Ye're a bonny ane indeed, to stand as unconcerned as if ye were the steeple, when the hale house is turned heels owre head to see how muckle that scoundrel has carried aff wi' him."

This seemed to awaken her from her reverie.

"Mother," said she, firmly, "you may spare your bad names; for whatever he *may do*, he will neither rob nor steal; and, so far as I can see, the scoundrel of whom *you* complain has carried off but little."

Mary's assertion was strictly and literally true; for, after the closest search, it was found that the whole of the mortar which secured the little window on the outside had been carefully displaced by means of a large nail, or some other iron instrument, and the widow itself set down upon

the ground without any of the glass being broken; but nothing was missing, and not a single article seemed to have been so much as moved from its place. Great was the wonder which now rose as to who the depredator could be, and what motive he could possibly have had for acting so strange a part. Mary was strictly questioned as to the time and manner of her guest's departure; but her evidence tended in no way to clear up the mystery. After much conjecture had been wasted to no purpose, as daylight grew broad, a hat was discovered under a low-growing apple-tree, which appeared to have been brushed by the branches from the head of the depredator while he was making his escape. It was carefully examined; but it bore no distinctive mark except the letters "A. A.," and "R. D.," in the crown, neither of which could be deciphered. Mary was again questioned as to its owner; but she only said, "It might belong to anybody, for anything she knew;" and, in the true spirit of discovery, it was carried by her mother to the house of the new-married pair. No sooner had Jenny Jackson—now Mrs Angus—seen it, than she exclaimed, "Whaur is Mary? whaur is Mary?" Mary was sent for.

"Whether is Ritchie or Jamie gaun to get ye noo, Mary?" she inquired, in an ecstasy of triumphant feeling. "I doubt it's Ritchie, after a', for this is his hat—the very hat he bought from Andrew before he gaed to the bleachfield; and Andrew said it was naething but you that took him there. See, there is baith their names—A. for Andrew, A. for Angus, R. for Ritchie, D. for Drycraig."

The whole was now out. Ritchie, from having lain down and fallen asleep without his hat, was thrown into a fever, which, after having brought him very near the grave, cured him effectually of his drunken habits and his maudlin affection at the same time. Though James Duff had departed in wrath, he soon returned in softened feeling; and, in less

than a year, he was married to Mary Mackenzie. Nanny Ferly was an incurable; but the ridicule to which she was subjected upon this occasion made her more cautious in the selection of her subjects. And thus ends our story of The Warning.

GRIZEL COCHRANE.

A TALE OF TWEEDMOUTH MUIR.

WHEN the tyranny and bigotry of the last James drove his subjects to take up arms against him, one of the most formidable enemies to his dangerous usurpations was Sir John Cochrane, ancestor of the present Earl of Dundonald. He was one of the most prominent actors in Argyle's rebellion, and for ages a destructive doom seemed to have hung over the house of Campbell, enveloping in a common ruin all who united their fortunes to the cause of its chieftains. The same doom encompassed Sir John Cochrane. He was surrounded by the king's troops—long, deadly, and desperate was his resistance; but at length, overpowered by numbers, he was taken prisoner, tried, and condemned to die upon the scaffold. He had but a few days to live, and his jailer waited but the arrival of his death-warrant to lead him forth to execution. His family and his friends had visited him in prison, and exchanged with him the last, the long, the heart-yearning farewell. But there was one who came not with the rest to receive his blessing—one who was the pride of his eyes, and of his house—even Grizel, the daughter of his love. Twilight was casting a deeper gloom over the gratings of his prison-house, he was mourning for a last look of his favourite child, and his head was pressed against the cold damp walls of his cell, to cool the feverish pulsations that shot through it like stings of fire, when the door of his apartment turned slowly on its unwilling hinges, and his keeper entered, followed by a young and beautiful lady. Her person was tall and commanding, her eyes dark, bright, and tearless; but their very brightness spoke of sorrow—of sorrow too deep

to be wept away; and her raven tresses were parted over an open brow, clear and pure as the polished marble. The unhappy captive raised his head as they entered—

"My child! my own Grizel!" he exclaimed, and she fell upon his bosom.

"My father! my dear father!" sobbed the miserable maiden, and she dashed away the tear that accompanied the words.

"Your interview must be short—very short," said the jailer, as he turned and left them for a few minutes together.

"God help and comfort thee, my daughter!" added the unhappy father, as he held her to his breast, and printed a kiss upon her brow. "I had feared that I should die without bestowing my blessing on the head of my own child, and that stung me more than death. But thou art come, my love—thou art come! and the last blessing of thy wretched father ——"

"Nay! forbear! forbear!" she exclaimed; "not thy last blessing!—not thy last! My father shall not die!"

"Be calm! be calm, my child!" returned he; "would to Heaven that I could comfort thee!—my own! my own! But there is no hope—within three days, and thou and all my little ones will be ——"

Fatherless—he would have said, but the words died on his tongue.

"Three days!" repeated she, raising her head from his breast, but eagerly pressing his hand—"three days!" Then there *is* hope—my father *shall* live! Is not my grandfather the friend of Father Petre, the confessor and the master of the king? From him he shall beg the life of his son, and my father shall not die."

"Nay! nay, my Grizel," returned he; "be not deceived—there is no hope—already my doom is sealed—already the king has signed the order for my execution, and the messenger of death is now on the way."

"Yet my father SHALL not!—SHALL not die! she repeated, emphatically, and, clasping her hands together. "Heaven speed a daughter's purpose!" she exclaimed; and, turning to her father, said, calmly—"We part now, but we shall meet again."

"What would my child?" inquired he eagerly, gazing anxiously on her face.

"Ask not now," she replied, "my father—ask not now; but pray for me and bless me—but not with thy *last* blessing."

He again pressed her to his heart, and wept upon her neck. In a few moments the jailer entered, and they were torn from the arms of each other.

On the evening of the second day after the interview we have mentioned, a wayfaring man crossed the drawbridge at Berwick, from the north, and proceeding down Marygate, sat down to rest upon a bench by the door of an hostelry on the south side of the street, nearly fronting where what was called the "Main-guard" then stood. He did not enter the inn; for it was above his apparent condition, being that which Oliver Cromwell had made his head-quarters a few years before, and where, at a somewhat earlier period, James the Sixth had taken up his residence when on his way to enter on the sovereignty of England. The traveller wore a coarse jerkin fastened round his body by a leathern girdle, and over it a short cloak, composed of equally plain materials. He was evidently a young man; but his beaver was drawn down, so as almost to conceal his features. In the one hand he carried a small bundle, and in the other a pilgrim's staff. Having called for a glass of wine, he took a crust of bread from his bundle, and, after resting for a few minutes, rose to depart. The shades of night were setting in, and it threatened to be a night of storms. The heavens were gathering black, the clouds rushing from the sea, sudden gusts of wind were moaning along the streets, accom-

panied by heavy drops of rain, and the face of the Tweed was troubled.

"Heaven help thee, if thou intendest to travel far in such a night as this!" said the sentinel at the English gate, as the traveller passed him and proceeded to cross the bridge.

In a few minutes, he was upon the borders of the wide, desolate, and dreary muir of Tweedmouth, which, for miles, presented a desert of whins, fern, and stunted heath, with here and there a dingle covered with thick brushwood. He slowly toiled over the steep hill, braving the storm, which now raged in wildest fury. The rain fell in torrents, and the wind howled as a legion of famished wolves, hurling its doleful and angry echoes over the heath. Still the stranger pushed onward, until he had proceeded about two or three miles from Berwick, when, as if unable longer to brave the storm, he sought shelter amidst some crab and bramble bushes by the wayside. Nearly an hour had passed since he sought this imperfect refuge, and the darkness of the night and the storm had increased together, when the sound of a horse's feet was heard, hurriedly plashing along the road. The rider bent his head to the blast. Suddenly his horse was grasped by the bridle, the rider raised his head, and the traveller stood before him, holding a pistol to his breast.

"Dismount!" cried the stranger, sternly.

The horseman, benumbed, and stricken with fear, made an effort to reach his arms; but, in a moment, the hand of the robber, quitting the bridle, grasped the breast of the rider, and dragged him to the ground. He fell heavily on his face, and for several minutes remained senseless. The stranger seized the leathern bag which contained the mail for the north, and flinging it on his shoulder, rushed across the heath.

Early on the following morning, the inhabitants of Ber-

wick were seen hurrying in groups to the spot where the robbery had been committed, and were scattered in every direction around the muir; but no trace of the robber could be obtained.

Three days had passed, and Sir John Cochrane yet lived. The mail which contained his death-warrant had been robbed; and, before another order for his execution could be given, the intercession of his father, the Earl of Dundonald, with the king's confessor, might be successful. Grizel now became almost his constant companion in prison, and spoke to him words of comfort. Nearly fourteen days had passed since the robbery of the mail had been committed, and protracted hope in the bosom of the prisoner became more bitter than his first despair. But even that hope, bitter as it was, perished. The intercession of his father had been unsuccessful—and a second time the bigoted and would-be despotic monarch had signed the warrant for his death, and within little more than another day that warrant would reach his prison.

"The will of Heaven be done!" groaned the captive.

"Amen!" returned Grizel, with wild vehemence; "but my father *shall* not die!"

Again the rider with the mail had reached the muir of Tweedmouth, and a second time he bore with him the doom of Cochrane. He spurred his horse to its utmost speed, he looked cautiously before, behind, and around him; and in his right hand he carried a pistol ready to defend himself. The moon shed a ghostly light across the heath, rendering desolation visible, and giving a spiritual embodiment to every shrub. He was turning the angle of a straggling copse, when his horse reared at the report of a pistol, the fire of which seemed to dash into its very eyes. At the same moment, his own pistol flashed, and the horse rearing more violently, he was driven from the saddle. In a moment, the foot of the robber was upon his breast, who,

bending over him, and brandishing a short dagger in his hand, said—

"Give me thine arms, or die!"

The heart of the king's servant failed within him, and, without venturing to reply, he did as he was commanded.

"Now, go thy way," said the robber, sternly, "but leave with me the horse, and leave with me the mail—lest a worse thing come upon thee."

The man therefore arose, and proceeded towards Berwick, trembling; and the robber, mounting the horse which he had left, rode rapidly across the heath.

Preparations were making for the execution of Sir John Cochrane, and the officers of the law waited only for the arrival of the mail with his second death-warrant, to lead him forth to the scaffold, when the tidings arrived that the mail had again been robbed. For yet fourteen days, and the life of the prisoner would be again prolonged. He again fell on the neck of his daughter, and wept, and said—

"It is good—the hand of Heaven is in this!"

"Said I not," replied the maiden—and for the first time she wept aloud—"that my father should not die."

The fourteen days were not yet past, when the prison-doors flew open, and the old Earl of Dundonald rushed to the arms of his son. His intercession with the confessor had been at length successful; and, after twice signing the warrant for the execution of Sir John, which had as often failed in reaching its destination, the king had sealed his pardon. He had hurried with his father from the prison to his own house—his family were clinging around him shedding tears of joy—and they were marvelling with gratitude at the mysterious providence that had twice intercepted the mail, and saved his life, when a stranger craved an audience. Sir John desired him to be admitted—and the robber entered. He was habited, as we have before described, with the coarse

cloak and coarser jerkin; but his bearing was above his condition. On entering, he slightly touched his beaver, but remained covered

"When you have perused these," said he, taking two papers from his bosom, "cast them into the fire!"

Sir John glanced on them, started, and became pale—they were his death-warrants.

"My deliverer," exclaimed he, "how shall I thank thee—how repay the saviour of my life! My father—my children—thank him for me!"

The old earl grasped the hand of the stranger; the children embraced his knees; and he burst into tears.

"By what name," eagerly inquired Sir John, "shall I thank my deliverer?"

The stranger wept aloud; and raising his beaver, the raven tresses of Grizel Cochrane fell upon the coarse cloak.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the astonished and enraptured father—"my own child!—my saviour!—my own Grizel!"

It is unnecessary to add more—the imagination of the reader can supply the rest; and, we may only add, that Grizel Cochrane, whose heroism and noble affection we have here hurriedly and imperfectly sketched, was, tradition says, the grandmother of the late Sir John Stuart of Allanbank, and great-great-grandmother of Mr Coutts, the celebrated banker.*

* Since the author of the "Tales of the Borders" first published the tale of "Grizel Cochrane," a slightly different version of it appeared in "Chambers' Journal." There is no reason to doubt the fact of her heroism; but we believe it is incorrect, as is generally affirmed, to say that she was the grandmother of the late Sir John Stuart of Allanbank. We may state that the author of these tales received a letter from Sir Hugh Stuart, son of Sir John referred to, stating that his family would be glad to have such a heroine as Grizel connected with their genealogy, but that they were unable to prove such connection.

SQUIRE BEN.

BEFORE introducing my readers to the narrative of Squire Ben, it may be proper to inform them who Squire Ben was. In the year 1816, when the piping times of peace had begun, and our heroes, like Othello, "found their occupation gone," a thickset, bluff, burly-headed little man, whose every word and look reminded you of Incledon's "*Cease, rude Boreas,*" and bespoke him to be one of those who had "sailed with noble Jervis," or,

> "In gallant Duncan's fleet
> Had sung out, yo heave ho!"—

purchased a small estate in Northumberland, a few miles from the banks of the Coquet. He might be fifty years of age; but his weatherbeaten countenance gave him the appearance of a man of sixty. Around the collar of a Newfoundland dog, which followed him more faithfully than his shadow, were engraved the words, "Captain Benjamin Cookson;" but, after he had purchased the estate to which I have alluded, his poorer neighbours called him Squire Ben. He was a strange mixture of enthusiasm, shrewdness, courage, comicality, generosity, and humanity. Ben, on becoming a country gentleman, became a keen fisher; and, as it is said, "a fellow feeling makes one wondrous kind," I also, being fond of the sport, became a mighty favourite with the bluff-faced squire. It was on a fine bracing day in March, after a tolerable day's fishing, we went to dine and spend the afternoon in the Angler's Inn, which stands at the north end of the bridge over the Coquet, at the foot of the hill leading up to Longframlington. Observing that Ben was in good sailing trim, I dropped a hint that an account

of his voyages and cruises on the ocean of life would be interesting.

Ah, my boy (said Ben), you are there with your soundings, are you? Well, you shall have a long story by the shortest tack. Somebody was my father (continued he), but whom I know not. This much I know about my mother: she was cook in a gentleman's family in this county, and being a fat, portly body—something of the build of her son, I take it—no one suspected that she was in a certain delicate situation, until within a few days before I was born. Then, with very grief and shame, the poor thing became delirious; and, as an old servant of the family has since told me, you could see the very flesh melting off her bones. While she continued in a state of delirium, your humble servant, poor Benjamin, was born; and without recovering her senses, she died within an hour after my birth, leaving me—a beautiful orphan, as you see me now—a legacy to the workhouse and the world. Benjamin was my mother's family name—from which I suppose they had something of the Jew in their blood; though, Heaven knows, I have none in my composition. So they who had the christening of me gave me my mother's name of Benjamin, as my Christian name: and from her occupation as *cook*, they surnamed me Cookson—that is, "Benjamin the Cook's son," simply Benjamin Cookson, more simply, Squire Ben. Well, you see, my boy, I was born beneath the roof of an English squire, and before I was three hours old was handed over to the workhouse. This was the beginning of my life. The first thing I remember was hating the workhouse—the second was loving the sea. Yes, sir, before I was seven years old, I used to steal away in the noble company of my own good self, and sit down upon a rock on the solitary beach, watching the ships, the waves, and the sea-birds—wishing to be a wave, a ship, or a bird—ay, sir, wishing to be anything but poor orphan Ben. The sea was to me what my parents

should have been—a thing I delighted to look upon. I loved the very music of its maddest storms; though, quietly, I have since had enough of them. I began my career before I was ten years of age, as cabin-boy in a collier. My skipper was a dare-devil, tear-away sort of fellow, who cared no more for running down one of your coasting craft than for turning a quid in his mouth. But he was a good, honest, kindhearted sort of a chap, for all that—barring that the rope's-end was too often in his hand.

"Ben," says he to me one misty day, when we were taking coals across the herring pond to the Dutchmen, and the man at the helm could not see half-way to the mast-head—"Ben, my little fellow, can you cipher?"

"Yes, sir," says I.

"The deuce you can!" says he; "then you're just the lad for me. And do you understand logarithms?"

"No, sir," says I; "what sort of wood be they?"

"Wood be hanged! you blockhead!" said he, raising his foot in a passion, but a smile on the corners of his mouth shoved it to the deck again before it reached me. "But come, Ben, you can cipher, you say; well, I know all about the radius and tangents, and them sort of things, and stating the question; but blow me if I have a multiplication-table on board—my fingers are of no use at a long number, and I am always getting out of it counting by chalks;—so come below, Ben, and look over the question, and let us find where we are. I know I have made a mistake some way; and mark ye, Ben, if you don't find it out—ye that can cipher—there's a rope's-end to your supper, and that's all."

Howsever, sir, I did find it out, and I was regarded as a prodigy in the ship ever after. The year before I was out of my apprenticeship, our vessel was laid up for four months, and the skipper sent me to school during the time, at his own expense, saying—

"Get navigation, Ben, my boy, and you will one day be a commodore — by Jupiter, you'll be an honour to the navy."

I got as far as "*Dead Reckoning*," and there, I reckon, I made a dead stand, or rather, I ceased to do anything but study "*Lunar Observations*." Our owner had a daughter, my own age to a day. I can't describe her, sir; I haven't enough of what I suppose you would call poetry about me for that, but, upon the word of a sailor, her hair was like night rendered transparent — black, jet black; her neck white as the spray on the bosom of a billow; her face was lovelier than a rainbow; and her figure handsome as a frigate in full sail. But she had twenty thousand pounds —she was no bargain for orphan Ben! However, I saw her, and that was enough — learning and I shook hands. Her father had a small yacht—he proposed taking a pleasure party to the Coquet. Jess—for that was her name—was one of the passengers, and the management of the yacht was intrusted to me. In spite of myself, I gazed upon her by the hour—I was intoxicated with passion—my heart swelled as if it would burst from my bosom. I saw a titled puppy touch her fingers—I heard him prattle love in her ears. My first impulse was to dash him overboard. I wished the sea which I loved might rise and swallow us. I thought it would be happiness to die in her company—perhaps to sink with her arm clinging round my neck for protection. The wish of my madness was verified. We were returning. We were five miles from the shore. A squall, then a hurricane, came on—every sail was reefed—the mast was snapped as I would snap that pipe between my fingers (here the old squire, suiting the action to the word, broke the end off his pipe)—the sea rose—the hurricane increased, the yacht capsised, as a feather twirls in the wind. Every soul that had been on board was now struggling for life—buffeting the billows. At that moment I had but one

thought, and that was of Jess; but one wish, and that was to die with her. I saw my fellow-creatures in their death agonies, but I looked only for her. At the moment we were upset, she was clinging to the arm of the titled puppy for protection; and now I saw her within five yards of me still clinging to the skirts of his coat, calling on him and on her father to save her; and I saw him—yes, sir, I saw the monster, while struggling with one hand, raise the other to strike her on the face, that he might extricate himself from her grasp.

"Brute!—monster!" I exclaimed; and the next moment I had fixed my clenched hands in the hair of his head. Then, with one hand, I grasped the arm of her I loved; and, with the other, uttering a fiendish yell, I endeavoured to hurl the coward to the bottom of the sea. The yacht still lay bottom up, but was now a hundred yards from us; however, getting my arm round the waist of my adored Jess—I laughed at the sea—I defied the hurricane. We reached the yacht. Her keel was not three feet out of the water; and with my right hand I managed to obtain a hold of it. I saw two of the crew and six of the passengers perish; but her father, and the coward who had struck her from him, still struggled with the waves. They were borne far from us. Within half-an-hour I saw a vessel pick them up. It tried to reach us, but could not. Two hours more had passed, and night was coming on—my strength gave way—my hold loosened. I made one more desperate effort; I fixed my teeth in the keel—but the burden under my left arm was still sacred—I felt her breath upon my cheek—it inspired me with a lion's strength, and for another hour I clung to the keel. Then the fury of the storm slackened;—a boat from the vessel that had picked up her father reached us—we were taken on board. She was senseless, but still breathed—my arm seemed glued round her waist. I was almost unconscious of everything, but an attempt to take her from me. My

teeth gnashed when they touched my hand to do so. As we approached the vessel, those on board hailed us with three cheers. We were lifted on deck. She was conveyed to the cabin. In a few minutes I became fully conscious of our situation. Some one gave me brandy—my brain became on fire.

"Where is she?" I exclaimed—"did I not save her?—save her from the coward who would have murdered her?"

I rushed to the cabin—she was recovering—her father stood over her—strangers were rubbing her bosom. Her father took my hand to thank me; but I was frantic—I rushed towards her—I bent over her—I pressed my lips to hers—I called her mine. Her father grasped me by the collar.

"Boy, beggar, bastard!" he exclaimed.

With his last word, half of my frenzy vanished; for a moment I seized him by the throat—I cried, "Repeat the word!"

I groaned in the agony of shame and madness. I rushed upon the deck—we were then within a quarter-of-a-mile from the shore—I plunged overboard—I swam to the beach—I reached it.

I became interested in the narrative of the squire, and I begged he would continue it with less rapidity.

Rapidity! (said he, fixing upon me a glance in which I thought there was something like disdain). Youngster, if you cast a feather into the stream, it will be borne on with it. But (added he, in a less hurried tone, after pausing to breathe for a few moments), after struggling with the strong surge for a good half-hour, I reached the shore. My utmost strength was spent, and I was scarce able to drag myself a dozen yards beyond tide-mark, when I sank exhausted on the beach. I lay, as though in sleep, until night had gathered round me, and when I arose, cold and benumbed, my delirium had passed away. My bosom, how-

ever, like a galley manned with criminals, was still the prison-house of agonising feelings, each more unruly than another. Every scene in which I had borne a part during the day rushed before me in a moment—her image—the image of my Jess, mingled with each. I hated existence—I almost despised myself; but tears started from my eyes—the suffocation in my breast passed away, and I again breathed freely. I will not trouble you with details. I will pass over the next five years of my life, during which I was man-of-war's man, privateer, and smuggler. But I will tell you how I became a smuggler, for that calling I only followed for a week, and that was from necessity; but, as you shall hear, it well-nigh cost me my life. Britain had just launched into a war with France, and I was first mate of a small privateer, carrying two guns and a long Tom. We were trying our fortune within six leagues of the Dutch coast, when two French merchantmen hove in sight. They were too heavy metal for us, and we saw that it would be necessary to deal with them warily. So, hoisting the republican flag, we bore down upon them; but the Frenchmen were not to be had; and no sooner had we come within gunshot, than one of them saluted our little craft with a broadside that made her dance in the water. It was evident there was no chance for us but at close quarters.

"Cookson," says our commander to me, "what's to be done, my lad?"

"Leave the privateer," says I.

"What!" says he, "take the long boat and run, without singeing a Frenchman's whisker! No, blow me," says he.

"No, sir," says I; "board them—give them a touch of the cold steel."

"Right, Ben, my boy," says he. "Helm about there—look to your cutlasses, my hearties—and now for the Frenchman's deck, and French wine to supper." The next moment we had tacked about, and were under the Frenchman's

bow. In turning round, long Tom had been discharged, and clipped the rigging of the other vessel beautifully. The commander, myself, and a dozen more, sprang upon the enemy's deck, cutlass in hand. Our reception was as warm as powder and steel could make it—the Frenchmen fought like devils, and disputed with us every inch of the deck hand to hand. But, d'ye see, we beat them aft, though their numbers were two to one; yet, as bad luck would have it, out of the twelve of us who had boarded her, only seven were now able to handle a cutlass; and amongst those who lay dying on the enemy's deck was our gallant commander. He was a noble fellow, sir—a regular fire-eater, even in death. Bleeding, dying as he was, he endeavoured to drag his body along the deck to assist us—and when finding it would not do, and he could move no farther, he drew a pistol from his belt, and raising himself on one hand, he discharged it at the head of the French captain with the other, and shouting out, "Go it, my hearties!—Ben! never yield!" his head fell upon the deck; and "he died like a true British sailor." But, sir, the other vessel that had been crippled at that moment made alongside. Her crew also boarded to assist their countrymen, and we were attacked fore and aft. There was nothing now left for us but to cut our way to the privateer, which had been brought round to the other side of the vessel we had boarded. She had been left to the care of the second mate and six seamen; but the traitor, seeing our commander fall, and the hopelessness of our success, cut the lashings and bore off, leaving us to our fate on the deck of the enemy. Our number was now reduced to five, and we were hemmed in on all sides—but we fought like tigers bereaved of their cubs. We placed ourselves heel to heel, we formed a little circle of death. I know not whether it was admiration of our courage, or the cowardice of the enemy, that induced them to proclaim a truce, and to offer us a boat, oars, and provisions, and to de-

part with our arms. We agreed to their proposal, after fighting an hour upon their deck. And here begins my short, but eventful history as a smuggler. We had been six hours at sea in the open boat, when we were picked up by a smuggling lugger named the Wildfire. Her captain was an Englishman, and her cargo, which consisted principally of brandy and Hollands, was to be delivered at Spittal and Boomer. It was about daybreak on the third morning after we had been picked up; we were again within sight of the Coquet Isle. I had not seen it for five years. It called up a thousand recollections—I became entranced in the past. My Jess seemed again clinging to my neck—I again thought I felt her breath upon my cheek—and again involuntarily I exclaimed aloud, "*She shall be mine.*" But I was aroused from my reverie by a cry—"A cruiser—a cutter ahead!" In a moment the deck of the lugger became a scene of consternation. The cutter was making upon us rapidly; and though the Wildfire sailed nobly, her pursuer skimmed over the sea like a swallow. The skipper of the lugger seemed to become insane as the danger increased. He ordered every gun to be loaded, and a six-oared gig to be got in readiness. The cutter fired on us, the Wildfire returned the salute, and three of the cutter's men fell. A few more shots were exchanged, and the lugger was disabled; her skipper and the Englishmen of his crew took the gig, and made for the shore. In a few minutes more, we were boarded by the commander of the cutter, and a part of her crew. I knew the commander's face; his countenance, his name, were engraved as with a sharp instrument on my heart. His name was Melton—the Honourable Lieutenant Melton—my enemy—the man I hated—the titled puppy of whom I spoke—my rival for the hand of my Jess. He approached me—he knew me as I did him. We lost no love between us—I heard his teeth grate as he fixed his eyes on me, and mine echoed to the sound.

"Slave! scoundrel!" were his first words, "we have met again at last, and your life shall pay the forfeit! Place him in irons!"

"Coward!" I hurled in his teeth a second time, and my hand grasped my cutlass, which in a moment flashed in the air. His armed crew sprang between us—I defied them all—he grew bold under their protection.

"Strike him down!" he exclaimed; and, springing forward, his sword entered my side—but scarce was it withdrawn, ere *his* blood streamed from the point of my cutlass to my hand.

Suffice it to say, I was overpowered and disarmed—I was taken on board his cutter, and put in irons. And now, sir (continued the squire, raising his voice, for the subject seemed to wound him), know that you are in the company of a man who has been condemned to die—yes, sir, to die like a common murderer on the gallows! You start—but it is true; and, if you do not like the company of a man for whom the hangman once provided a neckerchief, I will drop my story.

I requested him to proceed.

Well, sir (continued he), I was lodged in prison. I was accused of being a smuggler—of having drawn my sword against one of His Majesty's officers—of having wounded him. On the testimony of my enemy and his crew, I was tried and condemned—condemned to die without hope of pardon. I had but a day to live, when a lady entered my miserable cell. She came to comfort the criminal, to administer consolation in his last hour. I was in no mood to listen to the admonitions of the female Samaritan, and I was about to bid her depart from me. Her face was veiled, and in the dim light of my dungeon I saw it not. But she spoke, and her voice went through my soul like the remembrance of a national air which we have sung in childhood, and hear in a foreign land.

"Lady!" I exclaimed, "what fiend hath sent thee? Come ye to ask me to forgive my murderer? If *you* command it, I will."

"I would ask you to forgive your enemies," replied she, mildly; "but not for my sake."

"Yet it can only be for *your* sake," said I; "but tell me, lady, are you the *wife* of the man who has pursued me to death?"

"No—not his wife."

"But you will be?" cried I, hastily; "and you love him—tell me, do you not love him?"

She sighed—she burst into tears.

"Unhappy man," she returned, "what know you of me, that you torment me with questions that torture me?"

I thrust forth my fettered hand—I grasped hers.

"Tell me, lady," I exclaimed, "before my soul can receive the words of repentance which you come to preach—tell me—do you *love* him?"

"No!" she pronounced, emphatically; and her whole frame shook.

"Thank God!" I cried, and clasped my fettered hands together. "Forgive me, lady!—forgive me! Do you know me? I am Ben!—orphan Ben!—the boy who saved you!"

She screamed aloud—she fell upon my bosom, and my chained arm once more circled the neck of my Jess.

Yes, sir, it was my own Jess, who, without being conscious who I was, had come to visit the doomed one in his miserable cell, to prepare him for death, by pointing out the necessity of repentance and the way to heaven. I need not tell you that, the moment my name was told, she forgot her mission; and as, with my fettered arms, I held her to my breast, and felt her burning tears drop upon my cheek, I forgot imprisonment, I forgot death—my very dungeon became a heaven that I would not have exchanged for a throne

—for, oh! as her tears fell, and her heaving bosom throbbed upon my heart, each throb told me that Jess loved the persecuted orphan—the boy who saved her. I cannot tell you what a trance is; but, as I clung round her neck, and her arms encircled mine, I felt as if my very soul would have burst from my body in ecstasy. She was soon convinced that I was no criminal—that I had been guilty of no actual crime —that I was innocent, and doomed to die.

"No! no! you shall not die!" sobbed my heroic girl—"hope! hope! hope! The man who saved me shall not die!" She hurried to the door of my cell—it was opened by the keeper, and she left me, exclaiming, "Hope!—hope!"

On that day his then Majesty George III. was to prorogue Parliament in person. He was returning from the House of Lords; crowds were following the royal procession, and thousands of spectators lined Parliament Street, some showing their loyalty by shouts and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and others manifesting their discontent in sullen silence or half-suppressed murmurs. In the midst of the multitude, and opposite Whitehall, stood a private carriage, the door of which was open, and out of it, as the royal retinue approached, issued a female, and, with a paper in her hand, knelt before the window of His Majesty's carriage, clasping her hands together as she knelt, and crying—

"Look upon me, sire!"

"Stop! stop!" said the king—"coachman, stop! What! a lady kneeling, eh—eh? A young lady, too! Poor thing —poor thing—give me the paper."

His Majesty glanced at it—he desired her to follow him to St James's. I need not dwell upon particulars: that very night my Jess returned to my prison with my pardon in her hand, and I left its gloomy walls with her arm locked in mine.

And now you may think that I was the happiest dog alive—that I had nothing more to do but to ask and obtain the hand of my Jess—but you are wrong; and I will go over the rest of my life as briefly as I can.

No sooner did her father become acquainted with what she had done, than he threatened to disinherit her—and he removed her, I know not where. I became first desperate, then gloomy, and eventually sank into lassitude. Even the sea, which I had loved from my first thought, lost its charms for me. I fancied that money only stood between me and happiness—and I saw no prospect of making the sum I thought necessary at sea. While in the privateer service, I had saved about two hundred pounds in prize-money. With this sum as a foundation, I determined to try my fortune on shore. I embarked in many schemes; in some I was partially successful; but I persevered in none. It was the curse of my life that I had no settled plan—I wanted method; and let me tell you, sir, that the want of a systematic plan, the want of method, has ruined many a wise man. It was my ruin. From this cause, though I neither drank nor gamed, nor seemed more foolish than my neighbours, my money wasted like a snowball in the sun. Though I say it myself, I was not an ignorant man; for, considering my opportunities, I had read much, and I had as much worldly wisdom as most of people. In short, I was an excellent framer of plans at night; but I wanted decision and activity to put them into execution in the morning. I had also a dash of false pride and generosity in my composition, and did actions without considering the consequences, by which I was continually bringing myself into difficulties. This system, or rather this want of system, quickly stripped me of my last shilling, and left me the world's debtor into the bargain. Then, sir, I gnashed my teeth together—I clenched my fist—I could have cut the throat of my own conscience, had it been a thing of flesh and blood, for spitting my

thoughtlessness and folly in my teeth. I took no oath — but I resolved, firmly, resolutely, deeply resolved, to be wise for the future; and, let me tell you, my good fellow, such a resolution is worth twenty hasty oaths. I sold my watch, the only piece of property worth twenty shillings that I had left, and with the money it produced in my pocket, I set out for Liverpool. That town, or city, or whatever you have a mind to call it, was not then what it is now. I was strolling along by the Duke's Little Dock, and saw a schooner of about a hundred and sixty tons burden. Her masts lay well back, and I observed her decks were double laid. I saw her character in a moment. I went on board—I inquired of the commander if he would ship a hand. He gave me a knowing look, and inquired if ever I had been in the *trade* before. I mentioned my name and the ship in which I had last served.

"The deuce you are!" he said; "what! you Cookson! —ship you, ay, and a hundred like you, if I could get them."

I need hardly tell you the vessel was a privateer. Within three days the schooner left the Mersey, and I had the good fortune to be shipped as mate. For two years we boxed about the Mediterranean, and I had cleared, as my share of prize-money, nearly a thousand pounds. At that period, our skipper, thinking he had made enough, resigned the command in favour of me. My first cruise was so successful, that I was enabled to purchase a privateer of my own, which I named the Jess. For, d'ye see, her idea was like a never-waning moonlight in my brain—her emphatic words, "Hope!—hope!—hope!" whispered eternally in my breast—and I did hope. Sleeping or waking, on sea or on shore, a day never passed but the image of my Jess arose on my sight, smiling and saying, "Hope!" In four years more, I had cleared ten thousand pounds, and I sold the schooner for another thousand. I now thought my-

self a match for Jess, and resolved to go to the old man—her father, I mean—and offer to take her without a shilling. Well, I had sold my craft at Plymouth, and, before proceeding to the north, was stopping a few days in a small town in the south-west of England, to breathe the land air—for my face, you see, had become a little rough, by constant exposure to the weather. Well, sir, the windows of my lodging faced the jail, and, for three days, I observed the handsomest figure that ever graced a woman enter the prison at meal-times. It was the very figure—the very gait of my Jess—only her appearance was not genteel enough. But I had never seen her face. On the fourth day I got a glimpse of it. Powers of earth! it was her!—it was my Jess! I rushed downstairs like a madman — I flew to the prison-door, and knocked. The jailer opened it. I eagerly inquired who the young lady was that had just entered. He abruptly replied—

"The daughter of a debtor."

"For Heaven's sake!" I returned, "let me speak with them!"

He refused. I pushed a guinea into his hand, and he led me to the debtors' room. And there, sir—there stood my Jess—my saviour—my angel—there she stood, administering to the wants of her grey-haired father! I won't, because I can't, describe to you the tragedy scene that ensued. The old man had lost all that he possessed in the world—his thousands had taken wings, and flown away, and he was now pining in jail for fifty—and his daughter, my noble Jess, supported him by the labours of her needle. I paid the debt before I left the prison, and out I came, with Jess upon one arm, and the old man on the other. We were married within a month. I went to sea again—but I will pass over that; and, when the peace was made, we came down here to Northumberland, and purchased a bit of ground and a snug cabin, about five miles from this; and

there six little Cooksons are romping about, and calling my Jess their mother, and none of them orphans, like their father, thank Heaven! And now, sir, you have heard the narrative of Squire Ben, what do you think of it?

THE BATTLE OF DRYFFE SANDS.

THE power of custom to render the mind indifferent or insensible to danger, has never been better exemplified than by the mothers, and wives, and daughters of the ancient Borderers. They were wont to regard without apprehension the departure of their dearest relatives upon perilous expeditions—neither expressing nor experiencing any feeling except a wish for the success of the *raid*. Nay, as we have elsewhere stated, the fair dames of these stern warriors and marauders not unfrequently hinted that the larder needed replenishing, by placing on the table a dish, which, on being uncovered, was found to contain a pair of clean spurs; or by making the announcement that "hough's i' the pot;" or by calling, within hearing of the laird, on the herds to bring out THE COW; or, in short, by the thousand-and-one means which the ready wit of woman could devise. Rapine and war were the sole business of the chiefs and their retainers; and matrons and maidens, if they had wept and wailed whenever their natural protectors went "to take a prey," would have been thought just as unreasonable as some of our modern ladies, who will not allow their husbands to proceed about their daily avocations, without bestowing on them tears, kisses, and embraces, in superabundance.

The mistress of Thrieve Castle, Lady Maxwell, possessed her full share of that masculine character which was deemed befitting in a Borderer's wife; and, although she had mingled in the gaieties of the unhappy Mary's court, that sternness which was part of her inheritance as a daughter of the house of Douglas had not been perceptibly diminished in

the course of her residence at Holyrood. The aggrandisement of her husband's family was the perpetual subject of her thoughts; and whatever affected their honour or their interest was felt as keenly by Lady Maxwell as by the most devoted follower. At the time to which this narrative relates, her meditations ran even more frequently and fully than usual in their accustomed channel.

About ten years before James VI. succeeded to the throne of England, the hereditary feud which had for generations subsisted betwixt the Maxwells of Nithsdale and the Johnstones of Annandale broke forth with redoubled violence. Several of the lairds, whose possessions lay within the district which was disturbed by the contentions of these two races, had sustained serious injury from the incursions of marauders from Annandale, and, in consequence, had entered into a secret compact, offensive and defensive, with Lord Maxwell. This transaction reached the ears of Sir James Johnstone, who forthwith endeavoured to break the league which had so greatly extended his rival's power. The petty warfare betwixt the two barons was carried on for some time, without producing any very decisive result. The compact was still unbroken, and, to all appearance, the Maxwells were rapidly acquiring that ascendency which would soon render resistance hopeless. But the worsted party obtained the aid of the Scotts and other clans from the midland district. Lord Maxwell, on the other hand, rallied around him the barons of Nithsdale, displayed his banner as the king's lieutenant, and hastened to attack his opponents in their fastnesses.

Although Lady Maxwell entertained no extravagant dread with regard to the safety of her husband and son, or even with regard to the result of a conflict for which such ample preparations had been made, she could not suppress a feeling of impatience, when the afternoon of the second day after the departure of the expedition arrived without bring-

ing any intelligence of the result. She endeavoured, however, to check the melancholy course of her thoughts, by supposing that the pursuit of the enemy had occasioned the delay; but then she deemed it strange that her husband had sent no messenger with the tidings of his success; and again she pleased herself with the reflection, that he had reserved for himself the agreeable duty of announcing the happy issue of the conflict.

The shades of evening were descending, when Lady Maxwell, with her little daughters and younger son, proceeded to the battlements of the Thrieve. This ancient stronghold —which was a royal castle, though the keeping of it was intrusted to the family of Maxwell—was situated on a small island formed by the river Dee, in the centre of a muirish tract of country. Its gloomy appearance was, and still is, in harmony with the surrounding desolation; but it is now no longer the abode of man, and is left, a monument of departed greatness, to moulder away. Lady Maxwell had not continued long to gaze over the wilderness which stretched around, when she observed a band of mosstroopers approaching from the east; and the light was still strong enough to show that these warriors had not the appearance of a host returning victorious from battle. On the contrary, their steeds were jaded; they seemed themselves to be exhausted with toil; and, instead of the shouts of laughter which usually burst from the merry bands of Borderers, silence seemed to prevail in their ranks. "Pray God nothing evil hath happened!" exclaimed the lady, in alarm. And scarcely had she descended to the hall of the castle, when her eldest son, a youth of twenty years, stood in her presence—but he stood alone. The loss which she had sustained flashed across her mind in an instant. "Your father! where is my husband?" ejaculated Lady Maxwell, wildly. "But I need not ask—I know it all—he will return no more. Is it not so?"

The silence of her son showed her that she had guessed aright. But, although her heart grew sick, and her limbs waxed weak, she suppressed her emotion, and hastened to her chamber, there to give vent to her grief in solitude. Meanwhile, preparations for the evening meal were made; the exhausted soldiers ranged themselves beside the table which extended through the baronial hall; and their young master occupied the seat of his father—though, at the moment, he could have wished that some less trying proof of his self-command had been exacted. But it would have been deemed a want of hospitality, had he not remained beside his guests, of whom some were barons inferior only to himself in consequence.

When the hunger of the half-famished troopers was somewhat appeased, the events of the morning began to form the topic of conversation—which, however, was carried on only in whispers. Lord Maxwell, it seems, had encountered his opponents at the Dryffe Sands, not far from Lockerby, in Annandale, and had been defeated, partly in consequence of the cowardice of his confederates, whose alliance with him had been the sole cause of the renewed hostility. He was struck from his horse in his flight; and although he sued for quarter, the miscreant by whom he was assailed struck off his hand, which had been stretched forth as the sign of entreaty, and mercilessly slaughtered the unfortunate baron. Many of his followers perished in the fight, and most of them were cruelly wounded, especially by slashes in the face.* The young Lord Maxwell and his friends (having left a sufficient body of men to repel any immediate invasion) proceeded to the castle of the Thrieve, situated in the recesses of his family possessions, and a very considerable distance from the scene of the conflict, for the purpose

* This kind of wound is called a "Lockerby lick"—the place which bears that name being in the immediate vicinity of the field of battle.

of concerting measures with regard to the further prosecution of hostilities.

After the deliberations of the evening were concluded, and the wearied soldiers had gone to rest, Lady Maxwell summoned her son to her presence, and asked what course it was intended to adopt.

"Orchardstone talks of a bond," replied young Maxwell.

"A bond of alliance! And did you listen to him?" said the lady, looking keenly at her son; "did you let him repeat the word? An eye that shrinks from the gaze of another tells no good tale; a cheek in which the blood ebbs and flows within a moment, betrays no stout heart. It must not be. Peace! who would talk of peace to one who has just suffered bereavement? Talk not to me of peace—talk not to be of bonds. Talk of revenge. Remember that the blood of him who has been treacherously slain flows in your veins. You had no craven heart from him—you have none from me. Why then do you stand mute and wavering?"

"Madam, you have forestalled me," said the youth. "I will have revenge. The king ——"

"What! would you play the spaniel to James?—a craven sovereign, worthy of a craven suitor. Boy, will you break my heart outright? Will you doom me to disgrace, as the mother of a coward?—make me curse the day in which I was wedded, and the hour in which you were born? This comes of the monkish tricks taught you by that old man whom your father brought to his house, not to make a coward of his son, but to shelter a trembling priest from persecution."

"Madam, let me speak, if it please you. I am no coward—no craven," exclaimed the young lord, proudly. "I am not a child that needs to be chidden with the rod or with harsh speeches; and my father's blood boils as fiercely in my veins as the blood of the Douglas in yours. Our de-

liberations are not at an end, and by daybreak to-morrow they will be resumed."

"Nay, but, my son, you say not that you will seek revenge," cried Lady Maxwell; "you speak of those petty barons, whom you demean yourself so far as to consult. Your father told them what was his will, and never asked what was theirs. It was theirs to obey."

"Why do you speak so hardly of me?" asked the youth. "Have I not borne myself like my equals and my race? But you shall not want revenge—you shall not want the heart's blood that you ask. This house, these lands, these vassals, are yours, until revenge is yours. They will be employed in the pursuit of revenge. No lady shall hold your place; my life shall have but one object, till that object is accomplished; my being shall have but one end; my thoughts shall have only one aim; my heart will delight in only one hope."

"Stay, stay, my son," interrupted Lady Maxwell, in a calmer tone than had hitherto marked her address; "you have said enough—ay, more than enough—to satisfy my doubts. I would not remain sole lady of this castle."

"The oath is recorded in heaven, and may not be recalled," was the answer of the young lord.

Lord Maxwell, after receiving a maternal benediction, retired to his chamber; and, notwithstanding the difficulties which he knew it would be his lot immediately to encounter, the fatigue of the day was more than enough to insure him a good night's rest. His slumbers continued undisturbed, until the old man to whom reference has already been made came to his bedside early on the following morning. This person was a clansman, who had entered the church, and had embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. About ten years before the death of Lord Maxwell, that nobleman had quarrelled with the Earl of Arran, who at that time was the reigning favourite of James VI.; and he had then brought

his learned clansman to the Castle of the Thrieve. The rude warden of the west marches—for Lord Maxwell held that office—had no taste for the religious exercises which his namesake, John, wished to introduce into the household; and it may be said that the baron's favour for Presbyterianism was owing to the single circumstance that Arran was an object of detestation common to him and to the ministers. But, although few listeners could be found for the discourses of the aged preacher, his assiduity had enabled him to impart a share of his knowledge to his patron's son and heir, who in some measure repaid him for his care, by regarding him with strong feelings of respect and attachment.

When Lord Maxwell had dressed himself, he proceeded to the study of his aged friend, who had requested an interview with him at that early hour.

"I fear your rest has been broken by my impatience," said the minister; "but, as I was anxious to see you before your comrades were astir, it was not easy to do otherwise."

The young baron assured him that he was completely refreshed, and begged him to mention the cause of his anxiety.

"You will pardon me," said the old man, "if I intrude a word or two of advice upon you. The rules of Border morality require you to avenge the death of your father. I have oftentimes shown you wherein these rules were wrong; and you have owned that what I have said was true. Are you now ready to act upon your own independent judgment, to forego your desire for revenge, and to enter into alliance with Johnstone? Will you permit those barons who are now asleep beneath the roof-tree of your house to make you do what you know and feel to be wrong?"

"It may not be," said the other; "my fathers have died

on the battle-field, and I must not die in my bed. But I am bound by a solemn vow—by all that I hope and enjoy—to seek revenge, by day and by night, by all honourable means; to risk life, lands, liberty—ay, happiness in this world and the next—before I abandon the pursuit."

"Ay, but, my son," replied the aged minister—"for so would I call thee, who are dearer to me than life—a vow or oath which has an evil object in view may be honourably broken. The honour is in breaking, not in keeping it."

"The oath is no longer in mine own keeping; and I would not break it, even if I could. It may be that an evil oath should be broken; I pretend not to skill in these matters. But I feel," said Lord Maxwell, in an energetic tone—"I feel that this oath of mine cannot be broken. I have not taken it in haste; and sooner would I wish that my head, severed from my body, were placed over the gate of Johnstone's castle of Lochwood, there by turns to blacken in the sun and bleach in the rain, than I would now break my vow in one particular."

"Alas! for thee, my son!" exclaimed the minister, in the tremulous accents of age and of distress. "I deemed that thou wouldst prove an honour to thy kind and thy country; that for thee might be reserved the task of healing the wounds of this distracted land."

"Forgive me, my second father," said the young baron, taking his aged friend by the hand; "my doom is fixed, but my deeds must be done within a narrower sphere. My objects are not like those of princes. Blood has been shed, and it must be wiped away; life has been lost, and it must be avenged. My father has perished miserably—yet not miserably, for he died on the field of battle. His blood cries aloud for vengeance."

The aged minister's grief would not allow him to utter the prayer that passed from his heart to heaven on behalf of his erring pupil. Lord Maxwell silently wrung the hand

that was enclosed in his own, and hastened to meet the barons, who had now assembled in the hall, and only waited until their host should assume his place, before beginning their morning's repast.

Considerable division of opinion existed in the councils of the Nithsdale barons, with regard to the propriety of putting an end to the disturbances, by entering into league with Sir James Johnstone; but the determination with which Lord Maxwell avowed his intention of calling upon them all to act in conformity with their previous letters of *manrent*, soon put an end to the deliberations of the morning, and immediate steps were taken for pursuing the warfare with renewed vigour. Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone, who was married to a sister of Sir James Johnstone, but who had, nevertheless, taken the part of his chief, Lord Maxwell, in the recent disputes, was permitted to remain inactive; but his contingency of men was required as rigorously as that of any other baron who had bound himself to give all support to the head of the clan. Day after day incursions were made by these hostile tribes into the territory of each other; their hatred hourly waxed stronger; those courtesies which even mosstroopers sometimes practised were thrown aside with shameful indifference. Rapine and crimes of every complexion were of daily occurrence; villages were burned without compunction; neither age nor sex was spared; slaughter and conflagration were now the end and aim of the freebooters, instead of plunder. No redeeming ray was cast over the horrors of this continued warfare, by any of those circumstances which sometimes show the hearts of men in their more favourable aspects; and to describe the progress of events in this district of country for the course of many succeeding years, would serve only to weary and disgust with a repetition of the most fearful atrocities.

Is it wonderful that a familiarity with scenes of blood

should steel the heart of the young baron, and make him deaf to the voice of compassion or remonstrance? Need it be said that cruelty became the characteristic of his mind? that his temper became harsh, his disposition imperious, and his spirit as untameable as it was fiery? Neither the threats nor the entreaties of his sovereign himself could make Lord Maxwell lay aside his vindictive purpose: the former were despised, because they could not be executed; the latter were unheeded, because they were as dust in the balance, compared with the revenge which the young chief had vowed to obtain. The appointment of his experienced rival to the wardenry of the middle marches, about five or six years after the battle of Dryffe Sands, made the cup of bitterness overflow. Lord Maxwell took advantage of Sir James Johnstone's absence to ravage that baron's territory with greater ferocity than ever; and, on the pretext afforded by this last fearful inroad, he was prohibited from approaching the Border counties. The mandate was scorned, because it could not be carried into effect; and these hostile tribes continued to lay waste the territories of each other, until King James ascended the English throne, when, in the course of a year or two, the power of that monarch was so much strengthened, that he was, ere long, enabled to place under the command of Sir James Johnstone a force which was found sufficient for the purpose of expelling the refractory Lord Maxwell.

The fugitive baron, half-frenzied with anger and disappointment, was invited by his kinsman, the Marquis of Hamilton, to take up his abode in Craignethan Castle, a stronghold situated in the most fertile district of Clydesdale, upon a rock which overhangs the river. The marquis and his rather (who had died a short time before the arrival of Lord Maxwell at Craignethan) had always supported their relative, whenever differences arose betwixt him and the court of King James; and this support was tendered, not

so much from the coarser motives which, for the most part, lay at the foundation of noble friendships in those days, as from regard to Lord Maxwell, whose better qualities had not been so totally obscured in the course of his brief but bloody career, as to prevent him from becoming an object of affection among his own kindred and dependants.

But neither the marquis, nor his mother (who still lived to relate, rather for her own amusement than for the edification of her hearers, the achievements of her race), nor his sister, the Lady Margaret, could devise any means of dispelling the gloom which marked the countenance and deportment of their guest; and he seemed even to hate the very amusements with which his friends endeavoured to draw his thoughts away from the bitter recollections that were the daily subject of his contemplation. His only enjoyment seemed to consist in traversing the romantic scenes which lay around; and scarcely a day passed without a visit to some of those spots in which the rude magnificence exhibited by nature in the rocks and ravines, was contrasted with the gentleness and beauty that characterised many patches reclaimed from the waste by the industry of the neighbouring husbandmen. At other times he would roam through the woods until he lost himself in their mazes, and his mind was roused into activity by the effort to retrace his steps.

A beautiful dell, in which all sorts of scenery were harmoniously combined, was a favourite haunt of the baron; and here he often stretched himself at mid-day beneath the shadow of some vast oak or beech, that he might meditate in solitude and in silence on schemes for retrieving his affairs—for restoring him to his possessions in their full extent and without restraint—and, above all, for consummating that revenge which was still ungratified, notwithstanding all the rapine and slaughter of eight years.

As he was one day engaged in such contemplations—

profaning with evil thoughts the retreats which seemed to have been consecrated by nature to peace, and holiness, and all good affections—his attention was arrested by a song familiar to Borderers, and composed by one of the men who had been executed for the murder of Sir James Johnstone's predecessor in the wardenship of the middle marches. But, although the associations which were awakened in the mind of Lord Maxwell on hearing "Johnnie Armstrong's Last Good-night," * were of a mixed nature, the sweet tones of the singer, and the allusions to the Border, made him forget, in the delight of the moment, the more painful meditations which had been thus agreeably interrupted. The delicious dream lasted only for a minute; the voice of song was hushed; and although the baron, with curiosity to which he had for years remained a stranger, started alertly from the ground, that he might discover the sweet disturber of his thoughts, he was too late; for no one save himself stood within the dell, where he had sought solitude, though, as it turned out, he had not altogether found it.

His reveries were now at an end for the time; and he returned to the castle with that reluctance which every

* "The music of the most accomplished singer," says Goldsmith, in his "Essays," "is dissonance to what I felt when an old dairymaid sang me into tears with 'Johnnie Armstrong's Last Good-night.'" Of this ballad only two stanzas (which are subjoined) have survived till modern times. The beauty of these only deepens the feeling of regret at the loss of the rest.

"This night is my departing night,
For here nae langer must I stay:
There's neither friend nor foe o' mine
But wishes me away.

"What I have done, through lack o' wit,
I never, never can recall:
I hope ye're a' my friends as yet—
Good-night, and joy be with you all!"

man feels when he is about to mingle in society, without possessing the power of deriving delight from his intercourse with human-kind.

In the course of the evening—which was usually devoted by the guests of the marquis to sports, varied by occasional conversations on all sorts of subjects, from lively to severe—a keen dispute arose betwixt a young French count and one of his comrades with regard to the merits of Scottish music. After arguing, and stating, and re-stating their opinions, until they found that the one could not convince the other, they agreed to refer the point to Lord Maxwell, who seemed to be the only person not talking, or listening to talk, at the moment; and they then proceeded to give specimens at once of their own vocal powers and of the beauty of the music peculiarly prevalent in their respective countries. After the trial was completed, a round of laughter greeted the competitors, whose performance, it may be supposed from this reception, was none of the most beautiful. The umpire, when asked to deliver his award, only shook his head.

"Though I don't pretend to say which is the *better* singer," said Lord Maxwell, "I will undertake to convince our foreign friend that Scottish melodies are at least equal to the music which he adores; but you, my lord, must aid me, otherwise this mighty dispute must remain unsettled."

"Speak your wish," said the marquis, "and it shall be gratified, if I can help you."

"You have sometimes told me that I do nothing but mope about your woods and ravines, scarcely opening my eyes or my ears; but to-day, at least, it was not so. My day-dreams were agreeably dispelled by some songstress, who had escaped, however, before I could discover whether the lips which breathed such melody were as sweet as the song. Could you only hear "Armstrong's Good-night"

warbled as I heard it to-day, your disputes would soon be at an end. Perhaps some of the village girls may ——"

"No village girl, my lord," exclaimed the defender of Scottish music.

All eyes were in a moment fixed upon Lady Margaret, whose blushes had betrayed her. The ballad was once more sung; and need it be said that the disbeliever in Scottish melody became a convert, and, like other converts, became even more zealous than his old antagonist in praises of the song and of the songstress? Lord Maxwell began to chide himself for not having sooner discovered that Lady Margaret was not only endowed with a sweet voice, but possessed of great personal attractions. He had, indeed, frequently heard her sing, but the right chord had never been touched before; and it was only when the ballads with which he was familiar, and which were the native growth of his own province, fell upon his ear, that attention was awakened, and the full beauty of the vocal powers possessed by his unseen charmer was perceived.

Margaret Hamilton was now in her eighteenth year, and possessed that irregular beauty, glowing with life and health, which wins the heart more readily than the most faultless but chilling perfection of feature. The high intelligence and elevated feeling which met "in her aspect and her eyes," her bright complexion and raven ringlets, made her such a being as the imagination delights to portray and contemplate, though the beautiful vision which flits across the mind seldom has a living, and breathing, and moving counterpart in the material world.

The excursions of Lord Maxwell were not now so solitary as they had been before the occurrence of the incident already mentioned; and a walk without a companion was now the exception from the general rule. That companion —need it be recorded—was Margaret Hamilton. Every scene that deserved a visit—every wondrous work of nature

or curious work of man, within a range of several miles around Craignethan Castle—was pointed out by Lady Margaret for the admiration of her brother's guest. Nor was it long before the admiration bestowed upon the lifeless scenes which they contemplated in common was transferred to each other by the animated observers themselves. They rapidly proceeded through all the stages of that fever which, in its crisis, is called love. The feuds, and animosities, and revenge, of the Nithsdale baron were for a time forgotten; those better affections which had been cherished by the preceptor of his youth—the gentler feelings which produce the courtesies and kindnesses of life—the intellectual tastes which had long lain uncultivated, and had indeed borne many weeds under the influence of harsh passions—all these began in some measure to revive; his spirit, freed for a season from the operation of those motives which had hitherto guided it with so much power, appeared to be softened; his demeanour lost somewhat of its sternness; and a new passion seemed gradually to be expelling all those fiercer emotions by which he had hitherto been governed.

But these delightful days could not last for ever; and the marquis, although he was pleased when he first saw the change in the deportment of his relative, felt that the intimacy of his sister and his kinsman could not last long without ripening into attachment. Yet he attempted to soothe his disquietude by the usual excuse that his apprehensions were outrunning the reality; and he delayed all interference until interference was in vain. Besides, he was himself about to enter into the state of wedlock, and could not be in a very fit condition for treating the affections of others with anything like severity. Autumn had arrived before the marquis introduced the subject. He rallied his kinsman on his bachelorship.

"But why may not I remain a bachelor, and be as happy as you?'

"What!—I would Lady Margaret heard you. Could *she* not make you change your mind?" said the marquis, keenly eyeing Lord Maxwell.

The baron gave no reply; for the words died on his lips. The blood forsook his cheek; the fire was quenched in his eye; even his stature seemed to lessen; and he looked as if Heaven in its wrath had struck him with its thunderbolt. The oath which he had sworn, and which he had broken even by his sloth in lingering at Craignethan Castle, recurred to his mind in all its force:—one aim, one hope, one affection, one object—revenge, bloody revenge, on the head of the clan that had slain his father, was all for which he had vowed to live, until the deed of death was accomplished, or he himself was laid in the dust. He remembered, with loathing unspeakable, the words which he had uttered; his heart felt crushed within him; and he stood without speaking a word, until his horrorstricken friend seized him by the hand, and roused him from the fearful reverie into which he had so suddenly fallen.

"I thank you—I thank you," cried Maxwell, abstractedly; "but I forget. Your roof can shelter me no more. I must leave you now—ay, this very instant."

"But, my dear friend," said the marquis, interrupting him, "why do you speak of departure? I did not mean offence, and let none be taken."

"Nay, nay, I am not offended at aught: you have reminded me of my duty; and every moment that I stay here is a moment lost. I must to horse."

"But not without telling me why you leave me so abruptly. You say I have not offended you; and yet you talked not of departure until this moment. If the reason be one that can be told, why should you conceal it from your warmest friend?"

"My father's death is unavenged. I have loitered here like a dull slave shrinking from his task. I have forfeited

my faith—I have broken my oath. I must redeem the one, and fulfil the other."

"What task? what faith? what oath?" ejaculated the marquis, hurriedly.

"I have told you the task—to revenge my father's death! I have sworn that, until the life's-blood of his foe be sprinkled on the earth, I will not rest by day or by night—I will not enjoy land, power, or life itself, except as the means of accomplishing my purpose. I will remain unwedded—I will possess no hope in earth or in heaven, save one—the hope of revenge. I have broken my faith; for I have not laboured without ceasing, but have lazily sojourned under this roof. That faith must be redeemed by the fulfilment of my vow. Should the fair lady of whom you spoke," he added, in a tone little elevated above a whisper, "deign to look down on one so unworthy, she will see me a suitor at her feet whenever my first duty has been discharged."

The remonstrances of the marquis could avail nothing, and Lord Maxwell sallied forth from Craignethan Castle. The prohibitions of his sovereign had no power to prevent the baron and his vassals from renewing hostilities against their hereditary enemies. The awakened chief hastened, despite the royal mandate, to his native possessions; the joyous news of his return spread, in a day, from Thrieve Castle to the remotest hamlet in Eskdale—for the authority of the Maxwells extended over the vast district of country which lies on the Scottish side of the Solway. Immediate preparations were made for an incursion into Annandale. But these movements did not take place without the knowledge of Sir James Johnstone, who, on his side, mustered his vassals, and obtained reinforcements of royal troops, for the purpose of protecting his own territory, as well as enforcing obedience to the will of his sovereign, by compelling Lord Maxwell once more to retire from the Borders. The Lord of Nithsdale proceeded on his expedition, with the

view of pursuing his opponent into his fastnesses in the hills; but his schemes were baffled by Sir James Johnstone, who selected a rising ground not very far from the scene of the bloody conflict of Dryffe Sands, as an advantageous position for receiving the attack of his enemy. Lord Maxwell had expected that he would have taken his opponent unawares—that he would have found Johnstone's retainers scattered, and his territory undefended; but, nevertheless, with characteristic impetuosity, he resolved to risk a battle; the disgrace of retreating without striking a blow, the dismay which anything like vacillation was likely to produce among his retainers, and those motives which addressed themselves more directly to his passions, all weighed with him, even though he learned that his force was inferior to that of his foe.

The conflict was severe and protracted; but, although Lord Maxwell's followers fought with desperate courage, they were unable to keep their ground against the large and well-appointed force arrayed against them. Their leader rallied them once and again; animated them by his own example; called on them to bear themselves as they were wont; reminded them, by one or two words, of former conflicts bravely fought; and did all that he could to secure victory. But his efforts were in vain, and his retainers fled on every side, after the battle had been contested until not a man remained without a wound. He, however, did not join his followers, though they tried to hurry him from the field; but he disengaged himself from their grasp, and, frantic with disappointment, rushed into the midst of his adversaries. The cry, "Take him alive," was instantly heard; and Lord Maxwell, overwhelmed by numbers, and exhausted by his unremitting exertions, was the prisoner of Sir James Johnstone.

But he was not now permitted to choose his own place of retirement;and, after remaining for some days in Annan-

dale, he was conveyed to Edinburgh, and immured in the castle. Solitude, instead of soothing his passions, made them more vehement than ever; and the desire of revenge, which had been originally produced on the death of his father, now derived additional energy from his sense of personal injury and suffering.

It could not be supposed that the fate of Lord Maxwell could be regarded by his friends with that cold indifference which is the general feeling among men when misfortune overtakes their neighbours. The ties of clanship had not lost their strength in the days of King James; and other ties, which had been knit under happier circumstances, were not forgotten in the hour of danger. Lady Margaret Hamilton, who, like persons of the same rank, usually resided in Edinburgh during the winter and spring, heard of the imprisonment of the baron with grief, which, it may be, was not unmingled with joy at the anticipation of his presence in the same city; and the resolution that she would endeavour to procure his release was scarcely formed, when she found an agent and coadjutor in the person of a retainer of Lord Maxwell, commonly called Charlie o' Kirkhouse. This freebooter, who was the baron's foster brother, was devotedly attached to his chief; and he would have earnestly petitioned the authorities to place him in attendance on Lord Maxwell, had he not recollected that he would thereby, in a great measure, be prevented from assisting that nobleman to escape. Charlie, though a shrewd fellow, had been more in the practice of executing than devising schemes; and as he thought it scarcely possible for himself, single-handed, to effect his object, he proceeded to the Marquis of Hamilton's, for the purpose of obtaining an interview with Lady Margaret, who, as he supposed, would readily give him all the aid in her power. Charlie made his application on the pretext that he wished to visit his chief, and suggested that the marquis could facilitate his free and fre-

quent admission. But Lady Margaret recommended him rather to enlist in the royal service; and, as he would then be received into the castle, he would be better able to assist Lord Maxwell in any attempt to escape; while, at the same time, he would be able to co-operate with her in any schemes which she might devise for effecting the same object. By dint of perseverance, Charlie overcame the proverbial and preliminary difficulty of making the first step; and, by abusing his chief for a tyrant and everything that was bad (his peculiar dialect told too many tales), he next endeavoured to win the confidence of his superiors, and thus remove the only obstacles which prevented him from obtaining access to the prisoner. This, however, was a much more tedious process than he imagined. Will o' Gunmerlie, a follower of Johnstone, who was stationed in the castle by his chief, with the view of making up for the deficiencies in point of vigilance on the part of the constituted authorities, retained the clannish dislike of the Nithsdale soldier, and thwarted him so often, that he began almost to despair of success; but he still hoped, by ingratiating himself with some of the superior officers in the garrison, that all obstacles would ere long be overcome.

While he was one day on guard, in the immediate neighbourhood of Lord Maxwell's prison, one of his comrades approached, accompanied by a youth, whose bonnet was pulled down upon his brows, and whose face was, in consequence, for the most part concealed from view.

"Wha's this, Charlie, think ye?" said the soldier, laconically.

"I canna say I ken," replied Charlie, closely scrutinising the stranger.

"Hae ye nae guess wha he is?" repeated the soldier.

Charlie shook his head.

"Am I not," said the youth, stepping up to the perplexed sentinel—"am I not Lord Maxwell's brother?"

"His brither!!!" exclaimed Charlie, in a tone which can only be represented by a regiment of notes of admiration.

"Yes—his brother," repeated the youth, at the same time slightly raising his bonnet so as to give Charlie a peep of a very fair complexion. "Look at me again."

Charlie's wonder ceased in a moment.

"I daurna dispute what you say."

"Then he is Lord's Maxwell's brother?" said the conductor of the youth.

"Wha else should he be?" replied Charlie o' Kirkhouse, at the same time resuming his duties.

Leave of admission was soon obtained for the youth; and, in the course of a few minutes, he stood in the presence of Lord Maxwell. The room into which he was introduced was small and gloomy—for the light was admitted only by a single loophole, guarded by a bar of iron; and everything showed that this was, indeed, a prison. The tenant of this apartment was engaged at a table, placed as near the scanty window as possible, and covered with books and papers, which he seemed to be intently studying.

"Your brother, my lord," said the jailer. "I will return in half-an-hour," he added, turning to the youth, whom he then left standing in the middle of the room.

"My brother Charlie?" exclaimed Lord Maxwell, starting up, and hastening to meet his visiter. "I thought you had been in London. But how? you are not my brother. Charlie was a strapping fellow when last I saw him, and—excuse me—you have the advantage."

But, instead of answering, the youth blushed "celestial rosy red, love's proper hue"—and that so deeply, that even through the gloom the baron saw the glow on the cheek.

"What! a youth—and to blush!" said he, eyeing his visiter keenly; "it cannot be; and yet who should it be but ——"

"You have not forgotten 'Johnny Armstrong's Good-night,'" whispered the youth.

"Nor that voice," added the baron, saluting his pretended brother. "What good spirit has brought you here, my dear Lady Margaret?"

"I have brought you the means of escape: you can disguise yourself in my cloak and hat; the jailer will not know the difference in this dismal light, or rather darkness; the sentinel at the end of the court is Charlie o' Kirkhouse, who may be sent as your guide and guard to the gate; the cloak and hat will deceive the rest, whose recollection is doubtless by this time faint enough to favour the attempt."

"It must not be; for, even though no evil were to result from the attempt, I would not have you subjected to the rudeness of menials."

"Say not so, my lord, for nobody will dare to injure me. I never made a request before, and I may never make another."

"Nay—not so, I hope; but it cannot be that I should meanly leave you in my stead. Forgive me, my dear lady, if I refuse to avail myself of the means of escape which you propose; but deem me not so selfish as to value my own freedom above yours—as to skulk in disguise from these walls, and leave you here exposed to the insults of the angry underlings deputed by a suspicious enemy to watch my every movement."

"Would that I could prevail upon you, my dear lord," said Lady Margaret, affectionately, "to make the attempt; and would that I could prevail upon you to cast aside your schemes of vengeance, to devote your energies to the cause of your country, and to hear in your halls the sounds of merriment rather than the wailings of sorrow over friends whose lives have been lost in feudal warfare."

"Would that I could prevail upon myself," rejoined Lord

Maxwell, "and be content to pass my years in peace and in happiness, with none save one to care for. But I forget myself: these things cannot come to pass."

"And why not?—why may they not now? If you will sign a bond, disavowing all intent of renewing your hereditary warfare with your hereditary foes, you would be placed at liberty; and my brother will pledge his life and land for your word."

"No more—tempt me no more; my will was weak and wavering; but I have not yet renounced my vow. You have spoken of my hereditary foes—shall I be the first of my race to cast away my heritage? Happiness is a dream: I know it now—for this moment—though bolts and bars retain me here—though the sun's blessed ray scarce reaches me—though I have passed my days in tumult and trouble, which will accompany me till life has reached its close. But this is all a dream: in a little while, you, my dear lady, will leave me; and with you, the dream will depart."

"Is there no hope left? Is your heart closed against me? Is your ear deaf to my prayer? Will you not hasten from these horrid walls? Will you sign no bond?"

"Never—never: I would as soon sign my own death-warrant, or yours; for to sign my own would not wring my heart. I will sign no bond: I will give no pledge. I need no man's honour to be gauged for my forbearance. Pardon me, if I seem rude, and rough, and stern. I would that the time were come when it might not be so—that my destiny were accomplished; for it may be that, by brooding over schemes of vengeance, our minds are filled with strange presentiments. When one deed has been done—when my first task has been completed—when my vow is fulfilled—happiness may yet be in store."

Neither the tears nor the entreaties of Lady Margaret could prevail on the inflexible baron; who, however, declared his resolution to try some other means of escape; and

with this view suggested the propriety of ascertaining what assistance could now be rendered by Charlie o' Kirkhouse. Lady Margaret, as she was conducted from the baron's cell, communicated to the trooper the joint wishes of his chief and of herself.

Lord Maxwell now occupied his mind with projects of escape; and closely examined the aperture which admitted a scanty portion of light into the apartment; but its construction presented almost insuperable obstacles. Nothing daunted, however, he resolved to try whether, by displacing a part of the wall, he might not be able to open a passage; but the rate at which the work advanced was so slow, that a whole lifetime would have been required to accomplish his object.

As he had one evening arranged the rubbish according to his usual custom before meal-times, so that his operations might not be visible to the jailer, that functionary entered; but, instead of quietly placing on the table the viands which he bore, he addressed himself, in an under tone, to Lord Maxwell: "Would you like to escape, my lord?"

"Charlie o' Kirkhouse, as I'm a living man!" exclaimed the baron. "How got you here?"

"Hush—you shall know afterwards. Let us change dresses; I will remain in your stead."

"But you must not run into danger on my account."

"Danger! What danger? They dinna care to meddle wi' sma' gentry like me. You maun do as I bid you."

"Well, well, Charlie," said the baron, nothing loth to seize the opportunity of escape, undeterred by any feeling of delicacy in the event of his substitute being discovered, and satisfying his scruples with the reflection that Charlie's insignificance would protect him from insult or injury.

The exchange was forthwith made; and so well had Charlie selected the hour, that Lord Maxwell received no interruption, except from the sentry at the outer gate, who

wanted to crack a joke with his friend Charlie o' Kirkhouse. Though the soldier looked somewhat suspicious when his joke was acknowledged only by a "humph," yet nothing further occurring to strengthen his suspicions, he quietly resumed his measured tread.

The baron soon provided himself with a horse; and the following morning found him at Thrieve Castle.

Meanwhile, Charlie o' Kirkhouse, who remained the tenant of Lord Maxwell's apartment, was missed by his comrades; but the story of the sentinel, that he had seen "the Nithsdale trooper in a huff trampin' doun the toun," satisfied them for the night. The jailer—who had a second key, and thus was able to obtain admission—was taken aback on visiting the cell on the following morning, when he found himself rather roughly hugged by the prisoner, who thrust him head over heels into a recess filled with what was, in courtesy, called a bed. Before the astounded functionary could open his mouth, he heard the door locked, and found himself a prisoner. He shouted, kicked, and thumped on the door, and made all the din in his power. Charlie found the key in the door at the end of a passage which led to the cell, and which had prevented him from making his escape in the night-time; but his dress attracted the notice and suspicion of some officers. He was seized without delay. His excuse, however, that he had been "a guizardin" would have served his purpose, had not the imprisoned jailer, by dint of clamour, brought some of his comrades to the door, and let them know the state of the case. Charlie was immediately pursued; and, as he had not reached the castle gate, he was captured without difficulty.

"A pretty fellow you are," said Will o' Gunmerlie, "ye lecin scoon'rel! but yese get your ser'in for lattin aff yon villain, that ye used to misca' waur nor ony Johnstone. Here. Habbie, Dandie, gie him a roun' dizzen—and syne anither—and syne anither."

Charlie o' Kirkhouse fidgeted a little on hearing this order issued, and he would fain have made another attempt to escape; but it was in vain. "Come ane, come a'," he recklessly cried, when no hope was left, "I carena; four dizzen's nae waur nor ane." The punishment was inflicted with full vigour by Will o' Gunmerlie's ministers of justice; and the luckless Charlie was thrust out of the castle, to find comfort and shelter where he might.

Meanwhile, Lord Maxwell tried to raise the barons of Nithsdale; but the times had changed so greatly since the accession of James to the English throne, that the lairds felt themselves more independent than they were of old, when their only choice was either to join the standard of some powerful chief, or to suffer their possessions to be spoiled by his retainers. Besides, they were weary of contests with their neighbours; and most of them peremptorily refused to comply with the baron's wishes. His wrath may be more easily conceived than described. After spending some weeks in ineffectual attempts to overcome the resolution of his refractory vassals, he applied to Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone (who, as has already been stated, was connected by marriage with Sir James Johnstone), for the purpose of obtaining an interview with his antagonist, and of trying whether that baron could not be prevailed upon to intercede for him with the king. The aged knight, gratified at the conciliatory disposition shown by Lord Maxwell, fixed time and place for a meeting between the two chiefs, who accordingly hastened, each with a small body of attendants, to the confines of their respective territories, with the view of holding an amicable conference. Leaving most of their attendants at some distance, Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone, Sir James Johnstone, accompanied by Will o' Gunmerlie, and Lord Maxwell, accompanied by Charlie o' Kirkhouse (who had recovered from the effects of his

whipping), proceeded to enter on the business which had called them together.

"I houp ye're nane the waur o' bein i' the castle, Charlie," cried Will o' Gunmerlie, sneeringly.

"Nae thanks to you; I'll hae it oot o' yer hide some day.' Tak ye tent, ma man; ye've taen gude whangs o' ither folk's leather—look to yer ain."

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the only reply of the other.

"Dinna anger me," vociferated Charlie, in a nettled tone, looking at his pistol; "I tauld ye ye would get yer ser'in. There's nocht to hinder me frae giein ye't noo. There—tak that!" And in a moment the freebooter raised his pistol, and shot the unsuspecting Will o' Gunmerlie, who rolled from his horse in the agonies of death.

Sir James Johnstone, on hearing the shot and the groans of his murdered attendant, turned about to see what had happened, and (in the words of the old chronicler) "immediately Maxwell shot him behind his back with ane pistoll chairgit with two poysonit bullets." The unfortunate chief fell from his horse; and, although he lingered for some time, his wound was mortal. He lived, however, so long as to declare his wishes with regard to various weighty matters, and to utter a word of consolation to Orchardstone, whose grief was rendered agonising by the recollection that his credulity had been the means of hastening the death of Sir James.

Lord Maxwell immediately proceeded to the Castle of the Thrieve, where a large company was assembled, for the purpose, as they thought, of celebrating the reconciliation betwixt the two clans, and also the marriage of the chief with Lady Margaret Hamilton, who had been conducted thither by her brother. On Lord Maxwell's return, he sought a private interview with the marquis—told him what he had done—asked him to communicate the circumstances to the bride, and learn whether she would be wedded to a man whose hand was newly stained with blood.

"But he has slain his enemy in honourable battle," said Lady Margaret; "he has borne himself like a true knight; and, even though he may now depart for a season, the king has pardoned more heinous offences."

When the reply was reported to the baron, he muttered, with that sneering tone which betrays the bitterness of the heart—"In honourable fight!—most honourable! Would it had been so!—But I will not now undeceive her."

The nuptials proceeded; the festivities were commenced, and continued to a late hour. Early on the following morning, the baron left his weeping bride, and, with his faithful retainer, Charlie o' Kirkhouse, hastened in disguise from his own home and country.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Marquis of Hamilton and other friends of the expatriated Baron of Nithsdale, no pardon could be extorted from King James—whose virtue seems for once to have been proof against all the temptations and threats which his most powerful Scottish subjects could hold forth. Lord Maxwell's peace of mind was gone; for all that was dear to him—his country and kindred—were at a distance; the engrossing object of his thought for many years past had been attained; and his memory would not allow him to forget that his revenge had been accomplished by meanly assassinating his enemy. After he had remained for about three or four years, wasting the prime of his days in exile and in misery, he learned that Lady Margaret was in bad spirits; then in bad health; then that her life was despaired of; and he resolved, at all hazards, to revisit Scotland. But, before his voyage was ended, Lady Margaret had breathed her last—heart-broken in the midst of those enjoyments—wealth, power, and rank—which are fondly supposed, by those who possess them not, and by not a few who do possess them, to be the infallible means of securing human felicity. The only object which made life worth retaining, in the estimation of Lord Maxwell, was thus snatched

from him; and he would have immediately delivered himself up to justice, had it not been for the remonstrances of his faithful attendant, Charlie o' Kirkhouse. The family of Sir James Johnstone, as well as the constituted authorities, hunted the baron over the whole country; until, after frequently enduring the extremity of distress, he was seized in the wilds of Caithness, to which he had ultimately been driven. The indefatigable industry of his hereditary foes pursued him even to this distant retreat; and he was brought to Edinburgh, where, once more, he returned to his old quarters in the castle.

Among the friends who came to visit him, with the view of concerting measures for his defence, was the Marquis of Hamilton.

"Do you know that they mean to rob Charles of his birthright?" said the baron, on the entrance of his friend.

"Oh, my good lord, such deeds would never have been done, had some of your ancestors filled the seat of the mean-spirited prince who rules this unhappy country."

"Hush, hush, my friend!" said the marquis; "speak nought like treason. I know it all. My lord treasurer, or his deputy, cannot want the estates; and you must therefore submit to a charge of fire-raising as well as of murder."

"May my curse or my blessing—for I know not which is more likely to bring the worse consequences—rest upon them all, if they take from my race their own inheritance, because I, forsooth, have sent a hoary villain a little before his time to his account!"

"Speak not so harshly, kinsman; your sense of your own sufferings makes you unjust. Men say that these sufferings have been self-inflicted; but I will not say so. I come to learn if in aught I can mitigate them."

"Mitigate them, did you say? I ask no mitigation; for my life is now a burden. I ask no pity; I ask no sympathy. I have but one possession which I can still call my own; it

is not inherited; I cannot transmit it; it is my sole luxury, my sole treasure—and it is one which you will not covet. I have nought but my own misery that I can call my own—self-inflicted it may be; I dispute not about a word. But if it be self-inflicted, so much the more is it my own property. Forgive me, my lord, if I seem rude and hasty in temper; but I have scarce slept under a roof since, after long absence, I last touched my native soil, until last night, indeed, when I harboured here. I have been hunted by hounds of human breed; I have skulked in mosses, forests, and caverns, as familiarly as you have trodden the courts of palaces. Need you wonder I am worn to what I am—a mere skeleton—a wretched, decrepid thing—more like a being returned from the grave, than a living man?"

"It is but too true," said the marquis; "yet is there nought you would wish me to do? No token of affection to send to your friends ——"

"Nothing—nothing."

The time of trial at length arrived, and Lord Maxwell was indicted for the crimes of murder and of fire-raising. The introduction of the latter charge was the cause of bitter complaint on the part of the prisoner; for he well knew that the object of the public authorities was to obtain the forfeiture of his estates; and the treasurer-depute, Sir Gideon Murray, was supposed to have instigated them to combine this minor accusation with the other. The crime of fire-raising, according to the ancient Scottish law, if perpetrated by a landed man, constituted a species of treason, and inferred forfeiture. The purpose of public justice, however, was, on this, as an other occasions in the same reign, sullied by being united with that of enriching some needy favourite. No difficulty was felt in proving either of the charges; the former, indeed, was not denied; and the latter was established by the evidence of some sufferers in the course of the first outrages committed after the battle of Dryffe Sands

THE CLERICAL MURDERER.

THE story which has been told of John Smithson, the minister of Berwick, who was, in the year 1672, executed for committing a crime which has seldom stained the hands of the ministers of the religion of Christ, is as true as it is extraordinary. There are connected with it some circumstances which have communicated to it a character of even deeper interest than what generally invests tales of blood. Sympathy for the victim, disgust and hatred towards the perpetrator, and a general feeling of horror at the contemplation of the crime, are the usual emotions excited by the commission of an aggravated murder; but there are sometimes afforded, by these melancholy exhibitions of the weakness and sinfulness of our fallen nature, certain lights, "burning blue," which lay open, with their mysterious glare, recesses in the heart of man which no philosophy has ever been able to reach and develop.

It was remarked that Smithson was one of the best of sons. His aged mother was supported by him for a long period, and at a time when he could very ill spare the means. Indeed, such was his filial affection, that he once travelled fifty miles in one day, to get payment of a small sum of money that had been due to his father; and to procure which for his mother he required to beg his way to the residence of the creditor. When he returned, he presented to her the whole sum; and when asked upon what he had supported himself on the journey, he replied that the cause in which he was engaged procured him the means of subsistence, for he was not refused alms by a single individual whom he had solicited.

The baron was found guilty of both crimes, and sentenced to be beheaded. Every effort was made to obtain pardon for him; but the king and his counsellors were inexorable.

On the night before the execution, Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardstone, who was now very far advanced in years, visited his kinsman and chief, under the guidance of the Marquis of Hamilton.

"And it has come to this at last!" exclaimed the old man. "Would to heaven, my dear lord, you had listened to the prayer of your humble clansman, eighteen years ago. Brief time is left to make your peace. Some holy man may be able to soothe your mind, ruffled though it be."

"Mock me not, dear uncle," said the baron, in a tone of bitterness which startled the old man with horror. "Torture me not with talk about peace and holy men. They cannot give me peace—they cannot give me happiness on earth or in heaven. I am content with the share I have enjoyed. One gleam of sunshine has crossed my path—one fair flowret has blessed my sight—one spring has gladdened the weary wilderness—one human heart has been mine; and though it is mine no longer—though the flower has been blighted, and the bright gleam of happiness, now departed, has only made me more sensitive to the succeeding darkness, and the spring is dried, and the human heart lies in the dust—I ask no more. My cup of bliss is full—one drop has filled it. My heaven has been already enjoyed—no dotard can bring me tidings of weal or wo; I cannot part with it. Leave me, good uncle and good cousin. I would bless you, but my blessing might prove a curse."

His sorrowing friends left him as he wished. He was beheaded on the following morning.

His estates, which had been forfeited, were granted in part to the treasurer-depute, a favourite of the king; but, after the lapse of a few years, the attainder was reversed, and the honours and estates conferred upon his brother.

It was in consequence of his kindness to his father and mother that he was assisted by a rich friend to acquire education fitted for his becoming a clergyman. For this patron he ever afterwards felt the strongest esteem; and his gratitude kept pace with his affection. He attended his friend on his death-bed, and administered to him that knowledge and consolation which the clerical education he had received enabled him to bestow on his dying benefactor. Nor did he consider that the gratuitous assistance which had thus been extended to him could be repaid alone by affection towards the vicarious giver, but declared that, as it came from Heaven, so ought the gratitude of his heart to be directed to the origin of all gifts that are bestowed on the deserving.

Gratitude is not only its own reward, but the cause often of the means of its own increase; for Smithson's benefactor was so pleased with his attention to him when dying, that he left him a large legacy in his will, which relieved him from that state of dependence which he found had limited his means of doing good. He soon afterwards married a very beautiful woman, and got himself placed in the church of Berwick.

His ministerial duties were performed with the greatest devotion and zeal for the welfare of the people intrusted to his charge. His attention to his parishioners was unremitting—his prayers for the dying or the sorrow-smitten were fervent—and the poor and aged not only tasted of the consolations afforded by his pious sympathy, but often had their wants relieved by his charitable hand. No mortal eye could discover in this any insincerity, far less any cloak put on to cover evil already done, or any false assumption of a good and devout character, to avert the eye of suspicion from deeds intended to be perpetrated.

His character had indeed, in other respects, been tried, and found not awanting. A relation of his had died, and

left a large sum of money to be divided among his nephews and nieces. The money was recovered by Smithson, and upon the young heirs arriving at majority, was divided among them with so much honesty, that they all combined in addressing to him a letter, wherein they extolled his character for justice, honour, and piety, and attributed to him all the qualities of a saint.

In addition to all this, his conjugal character was unspotted. His attentions to his wife were what might have been expected from a good husband and a minister of the gospel; the breath of scandal never dimmed the purity of his fidelity; nor could the most querulous exacter of conjugal obligations have found any fault with the manner in which he fulfilled, not only the duties of a husband, but the more generous and less easily counterfeited attentions of the lover. His wife seemed to be grateful for his kindness, and respected his official character as much as she loved those private virtues, from which she was much benefited.

On a Sunday previous to that on which the Sacrament was to be dispensed, he preached in the church of Berwick. His text was the sixth Commandment—"Thou shalt not kill." His sermons, always animated and vigorous, and possessing even a tint of devout enthusiasm, were much relished by his congregation; but on that day he outshone all his former efforts of pulpit eloquence. He painted the character of the murderer with colours drawn from the palette of inspired truth; the cruel, remorseless, blood-thirsty heart of the son of Cain was laid open to the eyes of his entranced audience; the feelings of the victim were described with such power of sympathy, that the tears of the congregation fell in ready and heartfelt tribute to the power of his delineation; his own emotion, equalling that of his people, filled his eyes with tears, and lent to his voice that peculiar thrilling sound which calls forth, while it expresses. the strongest pity. The man of God seemed in-

spired, and he communicated the inspiration to those who heard him. His hand was observed to tremble; his eye was bloodshot; his manner nervous, tremulous, excited, and enthusiastic; his voice "broken with pity," and at times discordant with the overpowering excess of his emotion. His whole soul seemed under the influence of divine power; and his body, quailing under the energies of its nobler partner, shook like a thing touched by the hand of the Almighty.

On that morning the preacher had murdered his wife. By the time the congregation came out, the news had begun to spread. Nobody would credit what they heard, while they exclaimed that his sermon was strange, and his manner remarkable. A determination not to believe was mixed with strange insinuations, and the town of Berwick was suspended between extravagant incredulity and unaccountable suspicions. But the report was true, and the fact remains as one of those occurrences in life which no knowledge of the heart of man, though dignified with the proud name of philosophy, has been, or perhaps ever will be, able to explain.

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